Testimony of the Holy Quran

Hazrat
Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

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English Translation of

SHAHĀDAT AL-QUR'ĀN

by

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Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement

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Translator's Foreword

Testimony of the Holy Quran is an English translation of the Urdu book *Shahādat al-Qur'ān* by *Hazrat* Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d. 1908), the greatest in the line of illustrious Muslim religious reformers who appeared in the history of Islam. This profound thinker, prolific author and inspired saint, produced a vast number of literary works dealing with the deepest and most fundamental questions concerning religion in general and Islam in particular. Besides such topics, Hazrat Mirza has also explained in his writings the nature of his own mission and the position he claimed to hold in Islam. *Shahādat al-Qur'ān* is a book of this latter class.

To understand the subject matter of the book, some background knowledge is necessary. To fulfil this need, an Introductory Note is provided at the head of the *Notes* Section on page 88. Readers will benefit from a perusal of that note before commencing a study of the main book itself.

In *Shahādat al-Qur'ān* Hazrat Mirza deals mainly with the issues of whether the Hadith reports prophesying the coming of the Messiah among the Muslims are trustworthy, and whether the Holy Quran contains any indications of such a prophecy and expectation for the Muslim people. We strongly feel that this discussion will be of much interest and advantage to the increasing number of Muslims now turning directly to the Quran as the final and binding authority over all the other sources of Islam.

About the translation

The writings of Hazrat Mirza are great classic works, in religious, historical and literary terms, and therefore I have tried to make the translation as close and faithful as possible to the original text, subject only to the requirements of modern English idiom. Another reason for close adherence to the original words is the unfortunate controversy and misrepresentation surrounding some of his statements. It is tragic that distortions and misquotations should have blurred the real message of this great Muslim Reformer. Within these limits, I have tried to make the English rendering as simple and readable as possible. The original Urdu book carries two appendices which are in the nature of public announcements by the author. Not being relevant to the subject of the book itself, they have not been included in this translation.

In a few cases where extra words were required to make the translation clear, these are given within round brackets, thus: (...). Where it was found necessary to show the original term used by the author, it is placed within square brackets after its English translation, thus: [...]. All the main headings and the sub-headings have been inserted by the translator for ease of study, there being none in the original work. At certain points in the book, it was felt that most readers would require extra information in order to understand the text properly. To meet this need, I have provided explanatory notes which are given in a separate section after the translation. Serial number references in the translation refer to this Notes section. The author's own marginal notes have been set out as footnotes under the main text (as in the original Urdu work), and are marked with an asterisk (*).

When the author quotes a passage from the Quran in Arabic, usually he explains the meaning in Urdu, while sometimes he merely gives the Arabic quotation. The convention adopted in this translation is that in the former case we reproduce the quotation in Arabic and then give the translation of his Urdu explanation. Occasionally, for clarity, we have inserted the literal translation of the Arabic text as well, within parentheses under the Arabic text. Where he merely quotes the Quran in Arabic without explanation, we replace the Arabic by a suitable translation. For every Quranic quotation, we have added within parentheses the reference according to modern usage, viz., the chapter number, followed by a colon and then the verse numbers.

When transcribing Arabic words in English letters, we have generally given full transliteration with diacritical marks, according to the standard rules. However, in the case of names as well as Islamic terms commonly used in English (such as *Quran* and *Hadith*), diacritics have been omitted.

The typing of the text into a computer for typesetting, as well as the typographical design and layout of the book, are also the work of the translator.

ZAHID AZIZ (Dr.)
Nottingham, England
October 1988

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Testimony of the Holy Quran

A gentleman, Ata Muhammad by name, asks in his letter of August 1893 as to what evidence there is that I am the Promised Messiah, or indeed that it is necessary for us to wait for the appearance of any Messiah at all.

The first point to be remembered here is that the objector holds the belief that Jesus has died, as is plainly stated in the Holy Quran, but he denies that anyone is to arise in the Muslim nation bearing the name of Jesus. He admits that this prophecy is to be found in Hadith reports, but he considers these statements to be unreliable, arguing that Hadith reports were collected together after a long time, and consist largely of isolated reports which cannot be accepted with certainty. Consequently, he does not believe in the news about the Promised Messiah, established from the Hadith, to be positively factual, and considers all such reports to be worthless and insignificant, having no acceptable proof in his view. It is necessary, therefore, to reply to him in the light of his beliefs.

Let it be made plain that as regards this issue there are three points to be settled:

Firstly, are the reports of the coming of the Promised Messiah, which are found in Hadith, to be considered unreliable because the contents of Hadith are far from the standard of absolute authenticity?

Secondly, does the Holy Quran mention anything about this prophecy or not?

Thirdly, if this prophecy is a proven fact, what is the proof that it is fulfilled in my person?

I. Reliability of Hadith Reports

Taking the first of these three points, it should be made plain that no one in the world can dispute that the Hadith contains the clearest prophecy about the Promised Messiah. In fact, almost all Muslims agree that, according to Hadith, there will certainly come a man whose name will be Jesus, son of Mary. This prophecy is to be found in such abundance in collections of Hadith, for instance, *Bukhārī, Muslim* and *Tirmidhī,* as to satisfy the mind of a just person, and one is compelled to accept the common factor that a Promised Messiah is to arise. It is true that most of these traditions individually are not above the rank of isolated reports [*aḥād*].[1] Nonetheless, there is no doubt that, looking collectively at all these reports which have been recorded through diverse channels, it is proved definitely and certainly that the Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, did indeed foretell the coming of the Promised Messiah.

To these traditions in the hands of the *ahl as-Sunna,* if we add the traditions relied upon by other sects of Islam, for example the *Shiah,* this further shows the strength and weight of repetition. And when hundreds of books of the Sufis are studied, they give the same testimony. After this, when we study external sources, i.e. Christian works, the same news is also found there, and along with this the verdict of Jesus concerning the descent of Elijah from heaven makes it appear from the Gospels that such prophecies are not meant literally. This report of the coming of the Promised Messiah is found to prevail so widely in every age that it would be the height of ignorance to reject its repetitive currency. I say truly that if all the books of Islam through which this prophecy has been progressively published, are arranged according to century and put together, they would not number less than a thousand. It is, however, difficult to make a person comprehend this who is ignorant of Islamic literature. In fact, people raising such objections are so ignorant, due to their misfortune, that they cannot discern that a certain matter is supported by strong and weighty evidence. So the objector, having heard from somewhere that most reports of Hadith are of the isolated type [*aḥād*], has promptly concluded that all the accepted Islamic sources, except the Holy Quran, are unfounded and dubious, not being conclusive or certain at all.

Details of religion found only in Hadith

This belief, however, is a very great misconception, the first effect of which is to destroy one's faith. For, if it is true that all the records of the Muslims, other than the Holy Quran, are just a collection of falsehood, lies, fabrication, conjectures and uncertainties, then very little would remain of Islam. The reason is that we learn all the details of our religion from the traditions of the Holy Prophet. For instance, the prayer which we perform five times daily, although the obligation to do it is proved from the Holy Quran, but from where is it learnt that the morning prayer has two *raka'hs* as *farḍ* and two as *sunna,* the mid-day prayer has four *raka'hs* as *farḍ* and four and two as *sunna,* the sunset prayer has three *raka'hs* as *farḍ,* and the late evening prayer has four *farḍ?* Similarly, for details of the *Zakāt,* we are entirely dependent on Hadith reports. The same is the case with thousands of details, concerning matters such as worship, worldly dealings etc., which are so commonly known that to cite them would be to waste time and prolong the discussion.

Hadith as source of Islamic history

Besides this, the Hadith is the source of the history of Islam. If we do not consider its reports to be reliable, we cannot believe with certainty that Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali — may God be pleased with them — were Companions of the Holy Prophet, who succeeded him in this order, and also died in this order. If Hadith is considered unreliable, then there is no evidence to definitely believe that these holy personages existed. It would be possible, in that case, that all these names were fictitious, and in fact there had not been an Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman or Ali, because according to Mr Ata Muhammad, the objector, all these traditions are isolated, and these names are not given in the Holy Quran. So according to this principle, they cannot be accepted as authentic. Similarly, the Holy Prophet Muhammad's father having the name Abdullah, his mother having the name Amina, and his grandfather having the name Abdul Muttalib; one of his wives being called Khadija, one Aishah and one Hafsa, and his wet-nurse being called Halima; the Holy Prophet's withdrawing to the cave of Hira for worship, the emigration of some of his Companions to Abyssinia, his staying in Makka for ten years after the Call, and then all those battles no mention of which is to be found in the Holy Quran — all these facts are known only from Hadith. Should all of these be denied on the grounds that Hadith is not reliable? If this is true, Muslims would not be able to give any details of the life of the Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him.

One should consider this, that the entire sequence of the life of our leader and master: how he lived in Makka before the Call, the year in which he began to preach, the order in which the early converts joined Islam, the various kinds of persecution to which the disbelievers of Makka subjected him for ten years, the causes and the extent of the early battles, the battles in which the Holy Prophet himself took part, the lands to which the rule of Islam had extended by the time he died, whether he sent epistles to the neighbouring monarches inviting them to Islam, and if so, what was the result; then the conquests of Islam in the time of Abu Bakr after the Holy Prophet's death, the difficulties faced, the lands conquered during the time of Umar — all these events are known only through the traditions of the Holy Prophet and the sayings of his Companions. If Hadith is of no value, it would not only be difficult, but well-nigh impossible, to ascertain the happenings of those times. In that case, the opponents would have the opportunity to forge every sort of falsehood about the events of the time of the Holy Prophet and his Companions, and we would be giving them a great chance to extend their attacks. We would have to concede that the events and life stories discovered from Hadith are all valueless and unreal, so much so that even the names of the Companions cannot be accepted with certainty.

Hadith must be accepted unless contradicted by the Quran

To believe, therefore, that no conclusive and authentic information can be found through Hadith, is to destroy much of Islam with one's own hands. The true and correct position is that whatever has come through Hadith, unless contradicted by the Holy Quran in plain and clear words, must be accepted. For it is acknowledged that man by nature tells the truth, and resorts to falsehood only on account of some compulsion because it is not in his nature to do so. Then, as regards the Hadith reports which, by manifesting themselves in the form of prevailing beliefs and practices, have become the distinctive signs of the various sects of Islam, to dispute their firm authenticity and repeated occurrence is, in fact, a kind of insanity and madness. For instance, would a person today be right to argue that the number of *raka'hs* of the five daily prayers which the Muslims pray is a matter of uncertainty because there is no verse in the Holy Quran saying, for example, that one must pray two *raka'hs* in the morning, and two for the Friday prayer and also the *'Id* prayers, and the Hadith reports are mostly of the isolated type, not guaranteeing certainty? If such a view of Hadith is accepted, prayer is the first thing we lose, since the Holy Quran has not illustrated the form of prayer, and it is only by relying on the authenticity of Hadith that prayers can be performed.

If the opponents (of Islam) were to object that the Holy Quran does not teach the mode of prayer, and that the form which the Muslims have adopted must be rejected because Hadith reports cannot be relied upon, how would we answer this objection if we ourselves held the position that Hadith is worthless? We would have to concede the objection. In that case, the funeral prayers of Islam would also be baseless because the Quran nowhere speaks of a prayer having no bowing down or prostration. So consider and see what remains of Islam by rejecting Hadith.

Hadith only traces origin of prevailing practice

It is just a result of lack of reflection to think that the basis of Hadith reports is merely that a statement made by one or two persons is taken to be reliable, and therefore the narration is believed to be a saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him. The fact is that the system of Hadith is an off-shoot of the system of prevailing practice and custom, and was developed *a posteriori.* To illustrate by example, the compilers of Hadith saw that millions of people prayed three *raka'hs farḍ* during the sunset prayer and two during the morning prayer. Besides this, in every *raka'h* they recited the *Fātiḥa,* uttered *Āmīn,* whether loudly or silently, said the *at-taḥiyyāt* in the last sitting posture, followed by the *Darūd* and other supplications, and ended the prayer by uttering the *salām* towards both sides. Seeing this form of worship, the compilers of Hadith became interested in factually tracing the form of prayer back to the Holy Prophet Muhammad and to establish it from authentic, highly reliable, and uninterrupted lines of reporting. Now, although it is true that in order to collect this matter they did not try to discover one thousand or two thousand sequences of narrators for every single saying, but is it the case that it was the compilers who laid the basis of the prayer, and that before them there was no prayer in the world, and people were utterly unaware of it, and that it was only many centuries later (after the Holy Prophet's time) that the prayer came into being on the basis of one or two Hadith reports? So I stress that it is a serious misconception to think that the proof of the movements and the manner of prayer was merely these few reports which, apparently, do not amount to more than isolated sayings. If this were true, then first of all the basic practices of Islam would be dealt a serious, fatal blow which should be a matter of the highest concern for every self-respecting person calling himself a Muslim. But it is to be remembered that this view (of Hadith) is held only by those people who have never woken up to consider how it is that the history, practices, and acts of worship of Islam came to reach the high level of matters of certainty.

Prevailing practice provides strong evidence

Let it be clear that, in order to acquire this certainty, the unanimous practice of the nation is a very satisfactory means of proof. For instance, suppose that the Hadith reports showing the number of *raka'hs* in the morning or the sunset prayers are just two sayings, and are no stronger than isolated; the question is: were people not performing their prayers before this research and investigation was undertaken? Were prayers instituted after the reports were researched and their narrators were discovered? On the contrary, millions of people used to say their prayers in the customary manner. Even if we suppose that the whole system of reports and their authorities had not existed, nonetheless the prevailing practice of the Muslim nation would still have proved, definitely and conclusively, that the Islamic teachings about prayer had been constantly the same from age to age and generation to generation. It is true, however, that the tracing of the highly-reliable, continuous transmission of Hadith reports made this light still more splendid.

Hence, if Hadith reports are considered from this principle, it would be a serious error to apply the term *aḥād* [isolated] to the greater part of them, which is supported by prevailing practice. In fact, this is a grevious mistake which has driven the rationalists among the present day Muslims very far from the truth of Islam. They think that all the practices, customs, acts of worship, and biographical and historical details of Islam, in support of which Hadith is cited, are based on just a few reports. This is a clear error of theirs; nay, the system of practices which was established by our Holy Prophet himself spread among millions of people, so much so that it would have suffered no loss even if the compilers of Hadith had not existed in the world at all. Everyone has to acknowledge the fact that this holy Teacher and holy Messenger, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, did not keep his teachings confined so as to instruct only a couple of people and keep the rest in the dark. Had that been the case, Islam would have become so distorted that no compiler of Hadith could have put it right.

Although the pioneers of Hadith recorded thousands of reports regarding religious teachings, the question is: which was the report that had not been acted upon before they came to write it down, and of the contents of which the world was unaware? If there were any teaching or event or belief the foundation of which was laid by the pioneering compilers of Hadith on the basis of some report, there being no trace of it in the prevalent practice followed by millions of people, nor any mention of it in the Holy Quran, then there is no doubt that such a report, which was even discovered one and a half centuries later, is far below the level of certainty, and whatever might be said as to its unsatisfactory nature would be quite fitting. However, such reports really have nothing much to do with the teachings and history of Islam, and if you think about it, the compilers of Hadith have made little mention of reports of which no trace is to be found in prevalent practice. Hence it is not true, as some ignorant people believe, that the world came to learn of hundreds of essential teachings of the faith, even prayer and fasting, from the Hadith reports compiled by Imam Bukhari, Muslim and others. Were people living without practising the faith for 150 years? Did they not pray, give *Zakāt,* or perform the *Ḥajj?* Were they ignorant of the creed of Islam which is recorded in Hadith? Most certainly not. He who thinks so, shows astonishing stupidity.

Then, again, since Islam was flourishing as much before the age of Bukhari, Muslim and other compilers of Hadith, as after their writings, how insolent and foolish it is to hold the view, in an authoritative fashion, that only through the compilation of traditions in the second century (of the Muslim era) did that part of Islam develop and prosper which in the present day is known as *Ḥadīth*. And it is really to be regretted that, to say nothing of the critics, even the adherents of our religion — the ignorant ones — suffer from this misconception. They believe that, after a long time, merely on the basis of the compiled reports of Hadith were people made to accept many beliefs of Islam, having been completely unaware of these teachings prior to the recording of these reports. But the truth, which is quite evident, is that if the compilers of Hadith have put people under a debt of gratitude, it is only to the extent that as regards those matters which, from the very beginning, had been accepted by all in the form of prevailing practice, they investigated and searched for the authorities of their reporting and showed that the beliefs and the practices followed by the Muslims in their times were not novelties that had become mixed up with Islam just then, but were precisely the teachings that the Holy Prophet had imparted to his Companions by word and deed.

It is regrettable that, by misunderstanding the actual fact, people of little wisdom have made a major error due to which they look upon Hadith with much detestation. Although it is true that that part of Hadith which is not to be found expressed in prevailing beliefs and practices, nor supported by the Holy Quran, cannot be accepted with the fullest certainty, yet the other part, which is manifested in practice and which millions of people from the beginning have guarded by their practical conduct, and upon which they have been established, cannot be called dubious or uncertain. The continuing practice of an entire world, openly known to be traceable back from son to father, father to grandfather, and grandfather to great grandfather, the signs of which could be followed all the way back to the original source, cannot leave the slightest doubt, and there remains no option but to consider such continuing tradition as of the highest degree of authenticity. Then, considering that the compilers of Hadith established another system alongside the prevailing practice, tracing the authority for this practice back to the Holy Prophet Muhammad through channels of truthful and reliable reporters, to still raise criticism is really the work of those who have no share of the light of faith or human reason.

Prophecy about Promised Messiah in Hadith

After this introduction, it should also be made clear that the prophecy about the Promised Messiah contained in Hadith is not such that the compilers of Hadith wrote it down merely on the basis of a few reports. On the contrary, it is a proven fact that this prophecy, in terms of a belief, had been a part of the very life-blood of the Muslims from the beginning. It is as if there were as many testimonies to the authenticity of this prophecy as there were Muslims on the earth at that time, because they had been recalling it from the beginning as a belief. If compilers of

Hadith such as Imam Bukhari have discovered anything about this prophecy by their own researches, it is only this, that finding it to be widely known and upon the tongues of millions of Muslims, they, in accordance with their method, traced and established the authorities of the reports on which this prevalent belief of the Muslims was based. And from authentic, highly reliable, and continuously transmitted traditions, a whole mass of which is to be found in their books, they showed the authorities on which these are based. Besides this, one cannot find any reason, if these traditions are — God forbid — fabricated, as to why Muslims should have made this fabrication and agreed upon it, nor can one see any compulsion which forced them to do so.

Other related prophecies fulfilled

Then, when we see that there are in addition plenty of Hadith reports containing the prophecy that, in the latter days, the *ulama* of this nation will become like the Jews (of Jesus' time), losing righteousness, fear of God and inner purity, and in that age the religion of the cross will become dominant, the rule and dominion of the Christian faith spreading to almost the whole world, this provides further strong evidence on the authenticity of these traditions. For there is no doubt that this prophecy has been fulfilled in this age, our *ulama* of this time having in reality become like the Jews, and the dominion and government of the Christians having spread to the whole world in a manner without parallel in previous times.

Given that one aspect of this prophecy has been fulfilled in a clear, explicit and evident manner, what doubt can there be in the truth of the other part? It is acknowledged by every rational person that if, for instance, a hadith is of the isolated type, and moreover is not part of practice and custom, but consists of a prophecy which is fulfilled at the due time, wholly or partly, then no doubt will remain regarding the authenticity of the hadith. For example, there is no doubt that the hadith about "fire in the Hijaz" to be found in Bukhari and Muslim is an isolated report, but that prophecy was fulfilled after about 600 years in an exact manner, which is admitted even by the Europeans, and it came true at a time when centuries had passed since the compilation and publication of those books. Can we now hold the view that because such reports are isolated they cannot be accepted as authentic with certainty? When the truth of these has become manifest, such a view would be stupidity of the worst and most detestable type.

Similarly, consider that the prophecy about the Promised Messiah also says, in some places directly and in other places indirectly, that he will come in such an age when the power and rule of the Christians will have spread to the whole of the earth, the railway train will have been introduced, most of the earth will be under cultivation, people will be much involved in agriculture so that bulls will become very costly, there will be an abundance of canals on the earth, and it would be an age of peace in worldly terms. Accordingly, we see that this prophecy has been fulfilled in our time, for the star of Christian rule has reached such an ascendance that other governments and states amount to nothing in comparison, and we have also seen the railway train, the canals, and the spread of agriculture. Now consider if this prophecy does not contain that knowledge of the unseen which is beyond the ken of man. Could the decline of Islam be known to anyone at a time when its sword was falling upon the disbelievers like lightening? Can any human be such a master of the unseen as to disclose the news of a new form of transport which did not exist before? Raise your eyes, look, and ponder deeply, whether. this prediction is not one of those great prophecies the significance and manifestation of which is only encompassed by Divine knowledge, and which cannot be confused with the work of man and the weak plans of mortals.

Hadith prophecies about Islam

It should be made clear that these prophecies form a wonderful system, and studded with the jewels of subtle knowledge, fine points and hidden matters, they have been conveyed in an eloquent scheme and orderly arrangement of the highest degree, to the great glory of which man cannot make an approach. For instance, those prophecies are given first which refer to the period of the rise of Islam. In connection with these prophecies it is said that the Chosroes will be destroyed and no Chosroes will arise after him, and the Caesar will perish and no Caesar will arise after him.[2] Islam will progress and spread, and it will enter every nation. Then it is stated that a latter age shall come upon the Muslim nation when its *ulama* will become like the Jews, losing all righteousness and fear of God. Their faith will consist of false judgments, deception and scheming, and they will be engrossed in worldly greed. Such a strong likeness will they develop to the Jews (of Jesus' time) that if one of the latter had committed incest with his mother, they would do so as well.

In the same age, the Christians will spread throughout the world and dominate other peoples. Love of true faith will grow cold in the hearts. Deadly evil winds will blow, putting Islam in a constant series of unending dangers. Then will disasters come, and calamities multiply. Muslims will lose goodness from their hearts, and it would be better for a man to live in isolation, surviving on goat's milk, than to be associated with the Muslim community.

Then it is said that when you see this state of affairs, you should leave all these parties and bite the roots of a tree till the end of your life. In the same connection is then given the news of the advent of the Promised Messiah, and it is prophesied that at his hands will the Christian religion come to an end. It is said that he will "break the cross", not that he will crush their government. This was to refer to the fact that the Promised Messiah's dominion shall be spiritual, and he will have nothing to do with the governments of the world. On the contrary, he will fight with the power of his blessings, and enter the field of battle with his superhuman signs as weapons, till he breaks the splendour and greatness of the cross and exposes the unholy and profane doctrines of Christianity. For, his light, shining like a sword, will fall like lightening upon the darkness of unbelief till seekers-after-truth come to realise that the Living God is with Islam.

All these prophecies in Hadith are flowing like a river, and are so inter-connected that to deny one implies the denial of another, and to accept one implies the acceptance of another. Then again, who can cast doubt on such constant, orderly, definite and coherent prophecies, other than someone who is more deranged than a lunatic? Can a sensible person suggest even for a moment that these thousands of prophecies disclosing extraordinary matters are merely the fabrication of man? The fact is that these orderly, systematic, and grand prophecies cannot be denied, for their denial amounts to an enormous revolution and changing a whole world.

Fulfilment of worldly aspect of prophecies

Besides this, these prophecies contain a great sign of their authenticity, namely, that whatever is recorded in them regarding worldly revolutions, though it appeared impossible, all of it has come to pass. From the commencement of the thirteenth century *Hijra*[3] all the internal and external troubles began to develop, till by the end of the century religion and Islamic glory and rule was finished, and such disasters befell both the religion and the worldly condition of the Muslims that it was as if their world had changed. Keeping these catastrophies in view, if we look at the prophecies recorded by Imam Bukhari and Muslim etc. nearly eleven centuries before, at a time when the sun of Islam was at noon, when the beauty of its internal condition was the envy of (the proverbially handsome prophet) Joseph, and the glory of its external condition was putting Alexander the great. himself to shame, the thought of the perfect, holy revelation of our honourable Prophet, and his greatness, glory and spiritual power, brings us to spiritual ecstasy and we shed tears spontaneously. Glory be to God! what a light he was, to whom it was disclosed thirteen centuries ago, how his following would progress in the beginning, how it would advance miraculously, how it would fall suddenly in the latter days, and how in a few centuries the Christian domination of the world would be complete.

It is to be remembered that regarding the same age, in connection with the Promised Messiah, the Holy Prophet has also given the news, recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* in the words: *la-yutra-kanna 'l-qilāṣu fa-lā yus'ā 'alai-hā*. That is to say, in the time of the Promised Messiah, travel by camel will cease, so that no one will ride them at fast pace. This is a reference to the railway train, by the introduction of which no need will remain to make camels run. The camel has been spoken of because it is the largest animal used for transport by the Arabs, upon which they could travel with all the contents of their small homes. And the mention of the largest includes smaller things by implication. Thus the meaning was that in that age a form of transport would emerge which would surpass even the camel, and as you see after the invention of the railway all the work which camels used to do is now being done by trains. Could a prophecy be clearer and more manifest than this! The Holy Quran has also given news of this age, as it says:

و اذا العشار عطلت.

i.e. the latter days are those "when camels will be abandoned" (81:4). This, too, is a clear reference to the railway train, and so the hadith given above and this verse contain the same prophecy. And as the hadith plainly makes this statement in connection with the Promised Messiah, it must certainly be concluded from this that this verse is also speaking of the time of the Promised Messiah and making an implicit reference to him. However, despite these clear verses which are shining like the sun, people have doubts about these prophecies. Fair-minded persons can judge whether it is anything but folly to doubt those prophecies the hidden matters disclosed by which have been seen to be fulfilled in front of one's eyes.

I am sure that what I have written here regarding the prophecy about the Promised Messiah contained in Hadith is sufficient to satisfy the person who, after finding the truth, would not wish to continue unjust opposition. I have not quoted here the actual texts of the Hadith reports, nor given a summary of them all, for these are well-known and on the lips of the masses, so much so that even young school children in villages are familiar with them. Had I quoted all the Hadith reports regarding this issue in this brief booklet, I could have written ten volumes and still not be finished. However, I draw the attention of the readers to studying the original *Ṣiḥāḥ Sitta*[4] or their translations carefully to see the great frequency and intensity of expression with which these traditions occur.

II. Promised Messiah in the Quran

The second question to be resolved is whether the Holy Quran contains any reference to the Promised Messiah or not. Conclusive arguments show that such reference is indeed to be found in the Quran. There is no doubt that a person who considers the prophecies of the Holy Quran regarding the latter days of the followers of Islam, if he has a perceptive and living heart in his breast, will have no option but to accept that the Holy Quran certainly and definitely contains the news of a reformer who in other words could only be called the Promised Messiah and nothing else. To understand this prophecy, the following verses should be examined together. For instance:

> و التى احصنت فرجها فنفخنا فيها من روحنا و جعلناها و ابنها آية
> للعالمين. ان هذه امتكم امة واحدة و انا ربكم فاعبدون. و تقطعوا
> امرهم بينهم كل الينا راجعون. . . . حتى اذا فتحت ياجوج و ماجوج
> و هم من كل حدب ينسلون. و اقترب الوعد الحق فاذا هى شاخصة
> ابصار الذين كفروا ياويلنا قد كنا فى غفلة من هذا بل كنا ظالمين.

(21:91–93,96–97)[*]

The meaning is as follows. God guided the woman (Mary) who guarded her chastity. So He breathed into her His spirit, and made her and her son a sign for the world. And God said: This your community is a single community and I am your Lord, so serve Me. But they became divided into sects, shattered the unity, and raised mutual differences. Eventually they will all return to God. And they will remain in this condition till Gog and Magog[5] are let loose and they sally forth from every vantage point. So when you see that Gog and Magog are dominant in the earth, know that the promise of the spread of the True Faith has drawn nigh, and that promise is: He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, so that He may make it prevail over all other religions (The Quran 9:33 etc). It is then said that at the time of the fulfilment of this promise the eyes of the disbelievers will be fixedly open, and they will say: Woe to us, surely we were heedless of this, nay, we were unjust. That is, the Truth will be manifested most powerfully, and the disbelievers will realise that they were in error.

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[*] Ezekiel, ch. 38 and ch. 39 verses 5–6. *Rauḍat aṣ-Ṣifā, Bayān Aqlīm,* iv, v and vi, and *Tafsīr Ma'ālam.*

The sum and substance of these verses is that, in the latter days, many religions will spread in the world, and there will be many sects. Then two nations will emerge, whose religion will be Christianity, and they will attain supremacy in every field. So when you see that the Christian faith and Christian governments have spread throughout the world, know that the time of the promise is near.

SIGNS OF THE LAST DAYS

Coming of a Reformer — Blowing of the Trumpet

At another place it is stated in the Quran:

فاذا جاء وعد ربى جعله دکاء و کان وعد ربى حقاً. و ترکنا بعضهم
يومئذ يموج فى بعض و نفخ فى الصور فجمعناهم جمعاً.

> ("But when the promise of my Lord comes to pass, He will crumble it, and the promise of my Lord is ever true. And on that day We shall let some of them surge against others and the trumpet will be blown, then We shall gather them all together." — 18:98–99)

The meaning is that when the promise of God approaches, He will crumble the wall which was restraining Gog and Magog, and the promise of God is true. And on that day, during the rule of Gog and Magog, God shall let various sects surge against each other like waves. In other words, every sect will strive to make its religion and faith overcome others. Just as an ocean wave seeks to subdue under itself everything that it falls upon, in like manner shall each of the various sects fall upon the others to overwhelm them, and none shall do less than its utmost. Every sect will strive to make its religion supreme. They will be engaged in these struggles when "the trumpet" [*ṣūr*] will be blown by Divine command, and God will unite all factions upon one faith.*

The blowing of the trumpet here indicates that at that time, in accordance with the Divine law, a reformer will appear from God, coming with heavenly support. Life (spiritual) shall be breathed into his heart, and that life shall penetrate into others. It is to be remembered that the word *ṣūr* always points to great revolutions, so that when God moves His creation from one state [*ṣūra*] to another, the time of that change of form is described as "the blowing of the trumpet [*ṣūr*]". And the mystics, in their visions, can perceive even a physical existence for this trumpet. These are the wonders of a realm the secrets of which are not disclosed to anyone in the world but those who have severed all worldly connections.

The Promised Messiah

In any case, the verses given above prove that in the latter days the Christian religion and rule will hold sway over the world, and there will be many religious controversies between various nations, each one wishing to overcome every other. In that age, the trumpet will be blown to unite all nations upon the religion of Islam; that is to say, the heavenly order will be established in accordance with the Divine course, and a heavenly Reformer will appear. In reality, it is this Reformer who is called the Promised Messiah. For, as the troubles would be caused by the Christians, and God's chief purpose would be to shatter the glory of their cross, hence the man sent to invite Christians to the True Faith has been named Messiah and Jesus in reference to the nations being addressed. The other profound reason for this is that since the Christians made Jesus into a god, attributed their own fabrications to him, perpetrated much deception in the earth, and raised the dignity of Jesus beyond all limits, the sense of honour of that Living, Unique Being required that He send a servant of His from among the Muslims, bearing the name Jesus, son of Mary, and show a miracle of His power, to prove that to raise mortals to divinity is a folly and that God chooses whom He wishes to, and can elevate a handful of mere dust to heaven.

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* Let not a person lacking in experience think that because these passages, after this point, speak of hell, the context requires that the topic here must be about the Day of Judgment. It must be remembered that it is a common form of expression in the Holy Quran, of which hundreds of examples can be found in the Divine Word, that an account in connection with this world has appended to it an account in connection with the Hereafter, but each part in its subject matter is distinct from the other. The Quran is full of this technique. For instance, take the miracle of the rending asunder of the moon as mentioned in the Quran. That was a sign, but the Day of Judgment is mentioned in the same place, and consequently some unwise people who ignore the context say that the rending asunder of the moon did not occur, but will take place on the Day of Judgment.

Movement in hearts at time of coming of Reformer

It should also be remembered here that when a reformer appears in an age of prevalent evils, at the time of his advent there is a dissemination of light from heaven. That is, with his coming a light also descends upon the earth and is cast into every worthy heart. The world then inclines towards the ways of good and right by itself, in accordance with its capacity. Every heart turns its attention towards investigation and deep thought, and every alert mind is moved to seek the truth from unknown means. In short, a wind blows which makes every ready heart lean towards thoughts of the after-life and awakens its dormant faculties. The age appears to be moving towards some great revolution. These, then, are the signs which testify that the reformer has appeared in the world. And then, as great is the status of the coming reformer, with a corresponding power do these unseen promptings work in the ready hearts. Every good-natured person rises from slumber, and knows not who awakened him. Everyone of a sound temperament finds a change within himself, and cannot discover why the transformation came about. Thus there is a stir beginning to take effect in the hearts, which the unwise people believe started by itself. But this is the radiance which descends invisibly accompanying a *mujaddid*[6] or a Divine messenger [*rasūl*].

This fact is clearly proved from the Holy Quran and the Hadith, as God says:

انا انزلناه فی لیلة القدر. و ما ادراك ما لیلة القدر. لیلة القدر خیر من
الف شهر. تنزل الملائکة و الروح فیها باذن ربهم من کل امر. سلام
هی حتی مطلع الفجر.

That is: "We sent down this Book and this Prophet in the *Lailat al-Qadr,*[7] and thou knowest that the *Lailat al-Qadr* is better than a thousand months. In it the angels and the holy spirit descend with the permission of their Lord. And it is a time of peace in every affair till the dawn break" (ch. 97).

Now although according to Muslim belief the *Lailat al-Qadr* is the name of a blessed night, nonetheless the fact which God has intimated to me is that, besides this meaning which is accepted by the whole nation, the *Lailat al-Qadr* also stands for the age when darkness spreads throughout the world, and it is pitch black all around. Then that darkness by its nature requires that a light descend from heaven. So Almighty God at that time sends His luminous angels and the holy spirit down to the earth — this descent being in the manner appropriate to their nature as angels. Then the holy spirit forms a connection with the *mujaddid* and reformer who, having been honoured with the robe of Divine election, has been appointed to invite mankind to the truth. And the angels form a connection with all those people who are of a good, righteous and worthy nature, attract them towards the ways of good, and grant them help to do good. Then the paths of peace and good fortune open out in the world, and this continues to develop till religion reaches the fulness that has been destined for it.

Now one ought to note that in this chapter God has stated in clear, unequivocal terms that when a reformer comes from Him, heart-shaking angels necessarily descend to earth. Their descent produces a movement and urge in the hearts towards goodness and the path of truth. To think that such movement and agitation comes about by itself, without the appearance of a reformer, is contrary to the Holy Word of God and His ancient law of nature. Such views are expressed only by those who are ignorant of Divine secrets and who follow their own baseless conjectures. Nay, these are the peculiar signs of the coming of a Divine reformer, and are like dust particles for this sun. However, this fact cannot be discerned by just anyone. The clouded vision of the worldly-minded man cannot see this light. In his view, religious truths are a laughing matter and Divine knowledge a folly.

Shaking of the earth: *Surah* 'The Shaking'

Other verses describing the signs of the latter days, i.e. verses which speak of the spread, first, of tremendous darkness, and then give the indications of the descent of heavenly light, are as follows:

اذا زلزلت الارض زلزالها. و اخرجت الارض اثقالها. و قال الانسان
ما لها. يومئذ تحدث اخبارها. بان ربك اوحى لها.

(ch. 99, verses 1–5)

The meaning is that the last days will come "when the earth is shaken with terrible shaking" (v. 1) in accordance with its condition, i.e. a great change will come over the people of the world, and they will give themselves up to selfishness and worldliness. It is then said: "the earth will bring forth all its burdens" (v. 2), i.e. worldly knowledge, worldly cunning, worldly scheming, and worldly qualities to be found in human nature will all become manifest. Also, the earth upon which people live will display all its special characteristics. Many of its properties will be discovered by physical science and agricultural technology. Mines will be dug, and cultivation will become extensive. In brief, the earth will become productive, and implements of all kinds will be invented, so much so that "man will say: what is the matter?" (v. 3), why are new branches of knowledge, new kinds of technology, and new inventions coming into being? Then the earth, i.e. the hearts of men, will tell their story: that all these new things which are happening are not from them, but it is a type of revelation from God (vv. 4,5), for it is not possible that man by his own efforts be able to produce such wonderful knowledge.

It must be remembered that the inclusion, with these verses, of other passages that refer to the Day of Judgment is really according to the law of God that has been mentioned earlier. However, there is no doubt that the true and primary meaning of these verses is that which we have explained above. A strong and conclusive proof of this is that if these verses are interpreted literally, it leads to great difficulties. In other words, if we take the meaning to be that at some time, despite the world being populated, there will be such severe earthquakes as to turn the surface of the earth upside down, then this is utterly impossible and cannot happen. It is clearly written in the verse: Man will say, what has befallen the earth? If, then, it were really true that the earth would have been flattened by severe tremors, where would man be to ask the earth this question? He would have been annihilated by the earthquakes in the first place. The laws of physical science cannot be denied in any way. To take meanings which are absolutely false and opposed to actual evidence, amounts to making Islam a laughing stock, and giving the opponents a chance for criticism. Therefore, the true and correct meanings are those which we have explained here.

Christian nations producing shock waves

Now it is obvious that these revolutions, calamities and earthquakes of our time, the like of which had not been seen in the world, are being caused by the Christians. This, therefore, is the second argument upon the proposition that it is this nation which is the nation of the latter days by whose hands mischief of all kinds was to abound, and which has performed magical feats of all sorts in the world. And as it is written that the *Dajjāl*[8] shall claim prophethood, and also put forth a claim to Divinity, both these have been done by this nation. Prophethood was claimed in the following manner: the preachers of this nation interfered with the books of the prophets, with much irreverence and boldness, as if they themselves were prophets. They altered the texts as they liked, wrote explanatory notes to suit their own ends, and interfered impudently in every place for the purpose of fabrication. They concealed what was there, manifested that which was not, and gave altered meanings of the text with such authority as if they had received the revelation and were the prophets. Therefore, it is always observed that during debates and arguments they deliberately give such absurd replies, far from the truth, as if they are making up a new gospel. Similarly, their writings are leading to a new Jesus with a new gospel. They are not the least afraid of uttering falsehood, and through cunning they have written thousands of books about this false claim of theirs, as if they have seen Jesus sitting on the throne of Divinity with their own eyes.

And they claimed Divinity as follows: they interfered in God's works beyond all limits. They desired that no secret should be left hidden in the heavens and the earth which they do not fathom, and they resolved to bring all the works of God under their control, wanting all the powers of Divinity to come in their hands so that, if possible, even the setting and the rising of the sun should be in their control, the falling of rain should depend on their actions, and nothing should remain impossible for them. What else is a claim to Divinity! It is exactly this: that one interferes in the works and special powers of God, and is eager even to take His place. Those people who raise objections against the Hadith reports referring to the Promised Messiah and to the *Dajjāl* should consider, at this point, that if these prophecies had not been from God, but were the work of man, it would not have been possible for them to be fulfilled so clearly and beautifully. Was it ever imagined by anyone that these Christian people would, in some age, strive so hard to make man into god, and in their philosophical enquiries leave no special position for God? Look! the "ass" of *Dajjāl* whose ears are spoken of as being seventy measures apart, corresponds in most ways exactly to the railway train. And as it is recorded in the Holy Quran and Hadith that in this age transport by camel will cease, so we see that rail travel has defeated all such forms of transport, there being little need left for them now, and even that will probably not remain after a short while. Similarly, we have seen with our own eyes that the scholars and philosophers of this (Christian) nation have really produced such trouble in religious matters that a parallel cannot be found from the time of Adam till this day. They undoubtedly interfered in prophethood and in Divinity. What greater proof can there be of the authenticity of these Hadith reports than the fact that the prophecy contained in them has been fulfilled? These verses of the Holy Quran, viz., "When the earth is shaken with a terrible shaking", really refer to this age of the *Dajjāl,* and anyone having the least sense can understand this. The verse is clearly explaining the extent to which this nation will make progress in worldly knowledge.

Prophecies about modern advances

Then, among the signs of this age when physical knowledge and technology was to be developed, some inventions and developments are mentioned as examples.

و اذا الارض مدت. و القت ما فيها و تخلت.

(ch. 86, verses 3–4)

"When the earth is stretched" (v. 3), i.e. the earth will be cleared and the population will increase; "and it casts out what is in it and becomes empty" (v. 4), i.e. all the earthly potentialities will be manifested and displayed, as has been explained just now.

و اذا العشار عطلت.

("And when the camels are abandoned." — 81:4)

The meaning is that at that time the camel will become redundant and of no value. *'Ishār* means *a pregnant camel,* which is of great value in the eyes of the Arabs. It is obvious that this verse has nothing to do with the Day of Judgment, for the Doomsday is not the time when a male and a female camel could mate, and a pregnancy ensue. This is, in fact, a reference to the invention of the railway train, the camel being mentioned as pregnant to provide a strong argument that an event of this world is referred to, so that one's mind does not go towards the Hereafter in the least.

و اذا الصحف نشرت.

"When the books are spread widely and propagated" (81:10), i.e. means of publication and distribution of books will come into existence. This refers to the printing press and the postal service, prophesying that these will be commonplace in the latter days.

و اذا النفوس زوجت.

"When souls are joined with one another" (81:7). This refers to the relations between nations and countries. The meaning is that in the latter days, due to the opening up of travel routes and the setting up of postal and telegraph services, inter-relations among mankind will increase. A people will meet another people, links and trade connections will extend far and wide, and ties of friendship between distant nations will increase.

و اذا الوحوش حشرت.

"When the wild ones are gathered together with people" (81:5). This means that primitive nations will turn towards civilisation and acquire human values and discernment. The lowest people will gain the honour of material progress and dignity. Due to the spread of physical knowledge and technology, no difference will remain between the high and the low. In fact, the lower people will become dominant so much so as to have the means of wealth and the reins of government in their hands. The meaning of this verse is similar to the contents of a certain hadith.

و اذا البحار فجرت.

"When rivers are cut up" (82:3), i.e. there will be an extensive network of canals on the earth, and cultivation will be on a large scale.

و اذا الجبال نسفت.

"When the mountains are blown away" (77:10). Routes will be constructed through mountains for pedestrians and vehicles, and for trains.[9]

Spiritual darkness with modern advances — metaphorical prophecies

Apart from these, there are also given signs of the coming of widespread darkness. It is said:

اذا الشمس كورت.

"When the sun is rolled up" (81:1), i.e. an intense darkness of ignorance and sinfulness will envelope the earth.

و اذا النجوم انكدرت.

"When the stars become murky" (81:2), i.e. the religious leaders will no longer possess the light of sincerity.

و اذا الكواكب انتثرت.

"When the stars are swept off" (82:2), i.e. the truly spiritual divines will pass away. It is certainly not possible that the stars could physically fall on the earth and yet people continue to live upon it.

It should be recalled that the Gospels too contain such a prophecy for the advent of the Promised Messiah, to the effect that he shall come at a time when stars would have fallen to the earth, and the sun and the moon would have lost their light.[10] To take these prophecies literally is so much against reason that no sensible person would suggest that while the sun would in reality lose its light, and all the stars would fall to the earth, the globe would continue to be inhabited and the Promised Messiah would come in those conditions.

Again it is said:

اذا السماء انشقت.

"When the heaven bursts" (84:1), and similarly:

اذا السماء انفطرت.

("When the heaven is cleft asunder." — 82:1)

The Gospels too contain such prophecies about the coming of the Promised Messiah. However, these verses do not mean that at that time the sky will burst or lose its powers. The meaning is that just as a thing which is broken becomes useless, so will the heaven cease to function, so to speak. Blessings will not descend from heaven, and consequently the world will be filled with darkness and obscurity.

Coming of the Messiah

At one place it is stated:

و اذا الرسل اقتت.

"And when the messengers [*rusul*] are brought at their appointed time" (77:11). This is, in fact, a reference to the coming of the Promised Messiah, and it means to say that he will come exactly on time. It should be remembered that in the word of God the term *rusul* is applied to the singular as well as to one who is not a messenger.[11] I have explained many times that most verses of the Holy Quran comprise many aspects, as it is established from Hadith that the Holy Quran has outward meanings as well as deeper ones. So if the messengers of God are to gather as witnesses on the Day of Judgment,[12] we believe in and confirm this as well. However, having described here the bad signs of the latter days and then stating at the end that at that time messengers will be brought up at the appointed juncture, the context clearly bears witness that after the height of darkness God will send a messenger of His to judge between the various nations. And since it has been proved from the Holy Quran that that darkness will be caused by Christians, the man appointed by God will undoubtedly be sent to invite them to Islam and to judge concerning them. So it is due to this connection that he has been given the name *Jesus,* because he has been sent for the Christians as was Jesus, peace be upon him, sent for them. And in the verse "and when the messengers are brought at their appointed time", *al* ['the'] refers to the external i.e. the *mujaddid* whose advent has been promised by the Holy Prophet will be sent at the time of the darkness spread by Christians.

Summary of signs of the Last days

From the verses of the Holy Quran we have quoted above, it is very clear that it does indeed contain the prophecy that in the latter days the Christian faith will spread widely in the world, and those people will resolve to efface Islam from the earth and, so far as it is possible for them, omit not even the smallest step in support of their religion. Then will Almighty God turn to the aid of the religion of Islam, and at the time of this tribulation show that He is the guardian of His faith and His holy scripture. At that time, in accordance with His custom and law, a heavenly light will descend and to this light will be attracted every noble soul till all the scattered good souls gather under the standard of one faith. God has stated in plain words that at the time of the tumult of controversies and arguments the "blowing of the trumpet" shall take place, and then all good people shall unite upon one single faith. And it is also stated that at the time of darkness messengers will be sent. Now what greater clarification could there be than this, that God has given the following signs of the Last Days:

1: The dominance of Gog and Magog, i.e. the absolute sway of the Russians and the English. *2:* The arising of numerous sects. *3:* The debates between these sects, and their falling upon one another like waves of the ocean. *4:* The introduction of the railway train. *5:* The means of publication of books and newspapers, such as the printing press and the telegraph system. *6:* The digging of canals. *7:* The growth in population and the increase in cultivation of the earth. *8:* The blowing up of mountains. *9:* The development of all branches of modern knowledge and technology. *10:* The spread of sin and darkness, and the disappearance of righteousness, purity and the light of faith from the world. *11:* The coming of the *Dābbat al-arḍ* ['creature from the earth'],[13] i.e. the proliferation of such preachers of religion who possess not the tiniest bit of heavenly light, and are merely worms of the earth. Their deeds support the *Dajjāl* while their tongues are on the side of Islam. That is, in practical terms they are the servants of the *Dajjāl,* having had their features metamorphosed by him and looking like beasts, but their tongues are like those of human beings. *12:* The coming of the Promised Messiah, which has been metaphorically described in the word of

God as "the blowing of the trumpet" [*nafkh ṣūr*].

There are, in fact, two kinds of 'blowing' [*nafkh*]: one is that of error, and the other is that of guidance, as indicated in the following verse: "And the trumpet is blown, so all those in the heavens and the earth will swoon, except such as God please; then it will be blown again, and they shall arise, awaiting" (39:69). This verse has a dual aspect, applying to the Day of Judgment and also to the present world, as do verses such as "Know that God gives life to the earth after its death" (57:17) and "He sends down water from the clouds, according to their measure, then water courses flow" (13:17). As applying to this world, this verse (39:69) means that in the last days there shall come two periods of time: a period of error when everyone, whether of a worldly or heavenly nature, shall become indifferent and negligent, save him whom God protects. And then shall come the second period, of guidance, when suddenly people will "stand up and see", i.e. the indifference will depart and true knowledge will enter the hearts, and the wicked will become warned of their evil, though they may not accept the true faith.

ISLAMIC KHILAFAT ON LINES OF ISRAELITE PROPHETHOOD

Holy Prophet Muhammad's likeness to Moses

Besides these verses, there are many other passages in the Holy Quran proving the coming of this last age and the Promised Messiah. However, the derivation of their meanings is a subtle matter, and therefore a person of superficial understanding cannot turn to them, nor can coarse perception reach these fine points. Among these verses is the following:

> "Surely We have sent to you a Messenger, a witness to you, as [*kamā*] We sent a messenger to the Pharoah." (73:15)

Now obviously the word *kamā* [as] indicates that our Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, is the LIKE OF MOSES. Hence in the Torah, in the book of

Deuteronomy, the Holy Prophet Muhammad is described as the like of Moses. It is obvious that by *likeness* is meant complete likeness, not imperfect likeness. For if only imperfect likeness is meant, in that case there does not remain any distinctiveness of the Holy Prophet because many prophets could be found having such a likeness, as those who raised the sword under God's command and fought battles like Moses had done and won remarkable victories. Can they fulfil this prophecy? Most certainly not.

In short, our Holy Prophet can only have a distinction if likeness means perfect likeness. And from among the great aspects of perfect likeness, one is that, having bestowed upon Moses His messengership, God then instituted in his law a long chain of temporal as well as spiritual successorship, by way of reward and favour, which continued for about fourteen hundred years, and ended with Jesus. In this while, hundreds of kings and recipients of Divine revelation were born in the Mosaic order, and God ever kept on helping the supporters of the Mosaic law in such a miraculous way that all these events were preserved in history as an extraordinary memorial. As God says:

و لقد آتینا موسٰی الکتاب و قفینا من بعده بالرسل.
و قفینا علی آثارھم بعیسٰی ابن مریم.
و آتیناه الانجیل و جعلنا فی قلوب الذین اتبعوه رافة و رحمة.

"We gave Moses the book, and sent many messengers after him" (2:87), "Then, after them all, We sent Jesus, son of Mary" (5:46), "And We gave him the Gospel, and put mercy and compassion in the hearts of his followers" (57:27). In other words, they spread the faith, not by means of the sword, but by their kindness, humility and good morals. This verse contains the hint that although Moses' law was stern — hundreds of thousands of people being killed due to its commandments, so much so that even infants numbering almost four hundred thousand were killed[14] — God desired that this dispensation should end on a note of mercy, and that He raise a people among them who should draw men to the right path, not by the sword, but by means of knowledge and morals, and by the force of spiritual power.

Like of Jesus in the nation of the Like of Moses

Now it is essential that there must be likeness in terms of Divine favours, since perfect likeness is provable only if there is likeness of Divine favours as well. For fourteen hundred years, Moses was granted servants of the law who were messengers of God and His inspired ones; and this series ended with a messenger who invited to the truth, not with the sword, but merely by mercy and good morals. Therefore, so it was that our Holy Prophet was also granted servants of the law who, in accordance with the hadith "The learned ones among my followers are like the prophets of the Israelites", were Divinely inspired [*mulham*] and recipients of Divine communication [*muḥaddat͟h*].[15] And just as in the last era of the Mosaic law was sent Jesus who, not with the sword, but with good morals and mercy invited to the truth, likewise for this law God sent the Promised Messiah so that he too should invite to the right path only by good morals, mercy and heavenly lights. Just as Jesus came about fourteen centuries after Moses, this Promised Messiah too appeared at the start of the fourteenth century, and thus the dispensation of Muhammad attained complete analogy with the dispensation of Moses.

Muslim saints in place of Israelites prophets

If it is said that in the Mosaic order those who were raised for the advocacy of the faith were prophets, and Jesus was also a prophet, the reply is that the prophet [*nabī*] and the saint [*muḥaddat͟h*] are on a par in terms of being sent [*mursal*]. Just as God has called prophets as *mursal,* so has He termed saints as *mursal.*[16] It is in reference to this that in the Holy Quran occur the words: "We sent after him (Moses) messengers" (2:87), and not "We sent after him prophets". This points to the fact that by "messengers" are meant those who are sent, whether such a one is an apostle [*rasūl*], prophet [*nabī*] or saint [*muḥaddat͟h*]. As our Master and Apostle, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, is the last of the prophets [*k͟hātam al-anbiyā*], and after him there cannot come any prophet, for this reason saints have been substituted for prophets in this religious system.[17] And it is to this that the following verse refers: "A multitude from among the earlier ones, and a multitude from among the later ones" (56:39–40). As the word *thulla* [multitude] is used equally in both places, it is proved conclusively that the saints of the Muslims, in terms of their number and the length of their order, are equal to the apostles of the Israelites.

***Khalifas* to be raised among Muslims**[18]

Another verse to the same effect is as follows:

> وعد الله الذين آمنوا منكم و عملوا الصالحات ليستخلفنهم فى الارض
> كما استخلف الذين من قبلهم و ليمكنن لهم دينهم الذى ارتضى لهم و
> ليبدلنهم من بعد خوفهم امنا يعبدوننى لا يشركون بى شيئاً.
>
> "God has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will surely make them successors in the earth as He made those before them to be successors. And He will surely establish for them their religion, which He has chosen for them, and that He will surely give them security in exchange after their fear. They will serve Me, not associating anything with Me." (24:55)

Now look carefully. This verse also contains a clear reference to the same analogy. And if by this analogy is not meant perfect likeness, then these words become meaningless. For, the chain of successorship in the Mosaic dispensation lasted for fourteen hundred years, not just thirty years; and hundreds of successors [*khalīfa*], spiritual and temporal, appeared, not just four and then the end forever.[19]

***Khalifas* not only from the Companions**

If it is argued that the words *min-kum* ["those of you"] show that *khalīfas* would only be from among the Companions of the Holy Prophet, because the words "of you" address only the Companions, then such an idea is a clear error. Only such a person will express this view who has never studied the Holy Quran carefully nor understood its idiom. For, if it is true that only those people are addressed who were the believers present in that age, such a view would demolish the whole of the Quran. For instance, similar to the verse above is another passage in the Holy Quran in which the words are apparently addressed to those people who believed in Moses and were alive in his time. Indeed, this passage has a context strongly showing that it was they who were addressed. These verses are:

> قال سنقتل ابناءهم و نستحيى نساءهم و انا فوقهم قاهرون. قال
> موسى لقومه استعينوا بالله و اصبروا. ان الارض لله يورثها من يشاء
> من عباده و العاقبة للمتقين. قالوا اوذينا من قبل ان تاتينا و من بعد ما
> جئتنا. قال عسى ربكم ان يهلك عدوكم و يستخلفكم فى الارض
> فينظر كيف تعملون.

> "The Pharoah said: We will slay their sons and spare their women, and surely we are dominant over them. Moses said to his people: Ask for help from God and be patient. Surely the land is God's — He gives it as inheritance to such of His servants as He pleases. And the end is for the dutiful. They said: We were persecuted before you came to us and since you have come to us. Moses said: It may be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you successors [*k̲halīfa*] in the land; then He will see how you act." (7:127–129)

Now in these verses it is plain and clear that those people are addressed who belonged to Moses' nation and were present before him. They had complained of the Pharoah's injustices, and added that they had been persecuted before Moses had come and since he had appeared. Moses addressed them, saying that if they bore their afflictions patiently, God would have mercy on them and "destroy *your* enemy and make *you* successors in the land". However, historians know, and readers of the Jewish and Christian scriptures are well aware, that though their enemy, the Pharoah, was destroyed before their eyes, they themselves did not attain successorship [*k̲hilāfat*] in the land, neither temporal nor spiritual. Indeed, most of them were destroyed because of their disobedience, and died after wandering in the wilderness for forty years. After they had perished, a chain of successorship was established in their progeny, which meant that many kings and elect of God arose in that nation, such as David and Solomon. And so it went on till this chain of successorship came to an end in the fourteenth century with Jesus.

Holy Quran addresses ancient Israelites as "you"

It is clear from this that if a people are addressed, this does not imply that the address is limited to those of that nation who were present at the time. In fact, the Holy Quran also uses a mode of expression whereby, while addressing a particular people, the real object of its address is another generation, of the past or the future. For instance, in chapter *al-Baqara,* addressing contemporary Jews, God says:

يا بنى إسرائيل اذكروا نعمتى التى انعمت عليكم و اوفوا بعهدى اوف
بعهدكم و اياى فارهبون.

"O children of Israel, call to mind My favour which I bestowed upon you, and fulfil your covenant with Me. I shall fulfil My covenant with you; and Me alone should you fear" (2:40). Now it is obvious that the Jews of the Holy Prophet's time were those to whom applied the words: "abasement has smitten them" (3:111). No favour had been bestowed upon them, nor had a covenant been taken from them to the effect that they must accept the last of the prophets.

It is then stated:

و اذ نجيناكم من آل فرعون يسومونكم سوء العذاب يذبحون ابناكم و
يستحيون نساءكم. و فى ذلكم بلاء من ربكم عظيم. و اذ فرقنا بكم
البحر فانجيناكم و اغرقنا آل فرعون و انتم تنظرون.

"Remember the time when We delivered you from Pharoah's people, who subjected you to severe torment, killing your sons and sparing your women, and in this there was a great trial from your Lord. And when We parted the sea for you, so We saved you and drowned the people of Pharoah while you saw" (2:49–50). Now it should be noted that none of these events befell the Jews of the Holy Prophet's time. They had neither been persecuted by the Pharoah, nor had their sons been slain, nor had they crossed any sea.

God then says:

و اذ قلتم يا موسٰى لن نؤمن لك حتى نرى الله جهرة فاخذتكم
الصاعقة و انتم تنظرون. ثم بعثناكم من بعد موتكم لعلكم تشكرون.
و ظللنا عليكم الغمام و انزلنا عليكم المن و السلوى.

"Remember the time when you said: O Moses, we will not believe in you till we see God with our own eyes. So the lightening struck you while you looked on. Then We raised you to life that you might give thanks. And We made the clouds to give shade over you and We sent to you manna and quails" (2:55–56). Now it is obvious that Moses had died two thousand years before the Jews who were addressed in the Quran, and in Moses' time there was no trace of them. How could they put this question to him? Had the lightening struck them, or had they eaten manna and quails? Or was it that they were present in Moses' time in other bodies, and appeared in the Holy Prophet's time by way of reincarnation? And if this is not the case, what interpretation can we adopt other than to say that it is not necessary that the people who are addressed are actually those to whom the narrated incidents apply.

It is a principle applying to the word of God and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet that sometimes an event is mentioned in connection with an individual or a people, but in fact that event relates to another people or person. And it is in this category that falls the prophecy of the coming of Jesus, for in some reports in Hadith an event of the latter days is mentioned with reference to Jesus, whereas he had died. This event refers to Jesus in the same sense as the events of the deliverance from Pharoah, the eating of manna and quails, the striking of the lightening, the crossing of the water, and the complaint: "we cannot endure one food" (2:61), are mentioned in relation to those Jews who were our Holy Prophet's contemporaries, whereas these incidents concern an earlier generation of their people who had died centuries before. So if someone does not look at the logical side of the matter in interpreting these verses, and believes it essential to adhere to the words literally, these passages would establish the theory of reincarnation. For how otherwise could it be possible that God would ascribe a deed of one doer to another person who has nothing to do with the committing of the act, whereas He has Himself stated: "No bearer of a burden can bear another's burden" (6:165). If Moses' people disobeyed him and were struck by lightening, or if they had worshipped the golden calf and were punished, what had these other people to do with it who were born two thousand years later? It is true that from the time of Adam till now earlier generations are the antecedants of later ones, but the sins of one cannot be attributed to the other.

Then God's saying in the Holy Quran: "you disobeyed Moses" and "you said, we will not believe in God unless we see Him with our own eyes, and lightening struck you as a result of this sin" — what literal meaning could these words have except to say that all the Jews of the Holy Prophet Muhammad's time actually existed in Moses' time as well. It was they to whom manna and quails were sent down, they were those whom lightening struck, they were the ones for whose sake Pharoah was destroyed, and then the same people appeared in the Holy Prophet's time by reincarnation. Thus the form of address would be correct. The question is, Why is this plain meaning not adopted? Is this beyond God's power? Why should a meaning be accepted which belongs to the category of far-fetched interpretations? If, as suggested by our opponents, God will bring Jesus back to earth with his physical body after centuries, is He not powerful enough to raise to life again the Jews of Moses' time in the days of the Holy Prophet Muhammad in the same way, or to bring their souls back into the world by way of reincarnation? Considering that the return of Jesus to this world is accepted on the basis of unfounded sayings, why and for what reason can the appearance of the souls of all these Jews through reincarnation in our Holy Prophet's time not be accepted, when there are clear and plain arguments in the Holy Quran testifying to their existence. God plainly states:

و اذ قلتم یا موسیٰ لن نؤمن لك حتی نری الله جهرة فاخذتکم
الصاعقة و انتم تنظرون.

i.e. Remember the time when you, and not someone else, said: We will not believe till we see God manifestly; and then the lightening struck you while you looked on (2:55). In this verse there is another subtle point, viz., that because in this text God has not taken the then present Jews as standing for their earlier generations, but rather considered them to be actually the same as the earlier people, this means that the Holy Quran has given the same names to the Jews of the Holy Prophet Muhammad's blessed time as were the names of those former Israelites. For when these people were considered to be the same as the former generation, it would imply that the names be identical as well.

Coming Jesus is not previous Jesus

Now one should ponder attentively, that as God has addressed the Jews of the Holy Prophet Muhammad's time, saying in plain and clear words, you committed such evil deeds in the time of Moses, to give this clear and explicit text an interpretation and at the same time to believe on the basis of some Hadith reports that Jesus, who is dead according to the Holy Quran, will descend to the earth, is terrible injustice and inequity. Dear readers, if it had been God's law and custom to bring departed people back into the world, it would not be permissible to deviate from this clear Quranic verdict which, by repeatedly addressing a past generation, testifies to their being alive. And if here the overwhelming anxiety is that, although such a literal meaning is not beyond God's omnipotence, still it is against reason, and consequently an interpretation is adopted which is not inconsistent with logic, then the prophecy of the coming of Jesus must also be interpreted in a similar manner. For, if the coming to life of the ancient Jews in the blessed time of our Holy Prophet, or the re-appearance of their souls by way of reincarnation, is opposed to reason, why is it proposed in the case of Jesus that he shall come into the world again, when his death is loudly testified to by the verse: "When Thou didst cause me to die, Thou wast the watcher over them" (5:117).[20]

Is the return of the souls of the Jews to this world beyond the power of God, and against reason, but the return of Jesus to this earth with his physical body entirely rational? Again, if the literal meaning of a clear and conclusive text of the Quran can be departed from, because of the improbability of the literal interpretation, why is it not allowed to depart from the literal meaning of a Hadith report? Does the Hadith hold a higher status than the Quran, so that its reports must always be taken at face value, no matter how far from reason these may be, while the Quran can be given other interpretations?

Use of *min-kum* in the Quran

Reverting to the original subject, we quote:

> "God has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will surely make them successors in the earth as He made those before them to be successors." (24:55)

Denying the general character of these words, it is asserted that by *min-kum* ["of you"] are meant only the Companions of the Holy Prophet, and that the true successorship [*k͟hilāfat rās͟hida*] came to an end in their days, after which no sign or trace of this *k͟hilāfat* will remain in Islam till the Day of Judgment. It is as though, like a fantasy or a dream, the period of this *k͟hilāfat* was a mere thirty years, and then after that Islam fell upon evil fortune forever. But I ask, can any virtuous person hold the belief that, in the case of Moses, his law and the period of successorship to him undoubtedly lasted constantly for fourteen hundred years, but the blessings of the Prophet who is known as the "most excellent of messengers" and the "best of prophets", and whose law extends to the Day of Judgment, are limited merely to his own age, and God did not wish that the fruits of his blessings should be manifested through spiritual *k͟halīfas* for any length of time. Hearing such views makes us shudder, but sadly such people are also called Muslims who, out of sheer insolence and slyness, bring such insulting words to their lips, implying that the blessings of Islam do not lie ahead at all, but rather terminated a long time ago.

Besides this, it is rather strange logic to argue on the basis of the words *min-kum* that, because the address is directed to the Companions, hence this successorship is limited just to them. To interpret the Quran in such a manner is to surpass even the Jews (in the too literal interpretation of the scripture). Let it be clear that the words *min-kum* occur in the Holy Quran about 82 times, and except in two or three places where there is a special context, in all other places the words *min-kum* address all Muslims who are to come into existence till the Day of Judgment.

Some examples

By way of example, we quote below some of the verses in which the words *min-kum* occur:

فمن كان منكم مريضاً او على سفر فعدة من ايام اخر.

1. "Those of you [*min-kum*] who are sick or on a journey should fast a like number of other days" (2:184). Now consider whether this command was directed only at the Companions, or includes all Muslims till the Day of Judgment. Consider also the verses given below.

ذلك يوعظ به من كان منكم يؤمن بالله و اليوم الآخر.

2. "With this is admonished he among you [*min-kum*] who believes in God and the Last Day." (2:232)

و الذين يتوفون منكم و يذرون ازواجاً.

3. "Those of you [*min-kum*] who die, leaving wives behind." (2:240)

و لتكن منكم امة يدعون الى الخير و يأمرون بالمعروف و ينهون عن المنكر.

4. "There should be such people from among you [*min-kum*] who invite to good, and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong." (3:103)

انى لا اضيع عمل عامل منكم من ذكر او انثى.

5. "I (God) will not waste the work of a worker from among you [*min-kum*], whether male or female." (3:194)

لا تأكلوا اموالكم بينكم بالباطل الا ان تكون تجارة عن تراض منكم.

6. “Do not devour your property among yourselves by illegal methods except that it be trading by consent among you [*min-kum*].” (4:29)

و ان كنتم مرضى او على سفر او جاء احد منكم من الغائط او لامستم
النساء فلم تجدوا ماء فتيمموا صعيداً طيباً.

7. “If you are sick, or on a journey, or one of you [*min-kum*] has come from the toilet, or you have touched women, and you cannot find water, use pure earth to perform *tayammum.*” (4:43)

اطيعوا الله و اطيعوا الرسول و اولى الامر منكم.

8. “Obey God and the Messenger and those in authority from among you [*min-kum*].” (4:59)

من عمل منكم سوء بجهالة ثم تاب من بعده و اصلح فانه غفور رحيم.

9. “Whoever among you [*min-kum*] does evil in ignorance, then repents after that and does good, surely God is forgiving, merciful.” (6:54)

فما جزاء من يفعل ذلك منكم الاخزى فى الحيٰوة الدنيا و يوم القيامة
يردون الى اشد العذاب.

10. “Whoever among you [*min-kum*] does this, his recompense is only disgrace in this world’s life, and on the Day of Judgment they shall be sent back to the most grievous chastisement.” (2:85)

و ان منكم الا واردها.

11. “And there is none of you [*min-kum*] but shall come to it.” (19:71)

و لقد علمنا المستقدمين منكم و لقد علمنا المستاخرين.

12. “We indeed know those of you [*min-kum*] who go forward and We know those who lag behind.” (15:24)

In all these places, the words *min-kum* refer to Muslims generally, whether they were present at the time or were to come into existence afterwards till the Day of Judgment. Similarly in all other places, except in two or three cases, these have been used in a general sense. In all commandments, it appears that only the Companions are addressed, but to particularise them to the Companions without the support of the context is not permissible. For, every evil-doer could put forward the excuse that all the commands relating to fasting, prayer, pilgrimage, righteousness, purity, and abstention from evil, are only directed at the Companions and hence he need not observe them. Obviously only a hypocrite, and not a God-fearing person, could bring such words to his lips.

Reason why *min-kum* occurs in this verse

If the question arises in someone's mind, that if the verse "God has promised to those of you who believe" is general, and not particular, why were the words *min-kum* added and what was the necessity for this addition, since it should only have been said: God has promised to those who believe and do good that He will surely make them successors in the earth as He made those before them to be successors. The answer is that this promise draws a parallel with the true believers and the righteous who had passed away before the Muslims. Thus the meaning of this verse is as follows:

God had made such people to be successors [*k͟halīfa*] in the earth before you as were faithful and righteous, and who, along with their faith, had done good deeds; and God makes the promise that from among you too, O Muslims, those people who possess such excellent qualities and do good works, apart from having faith, will be made *k͟halīfas*.

Hence the words *min-kum* are not superfluous, but are intended to point to the true believers and the doers of good in Islam, for since in this verse the words "those who believe and do good" apply equally to the faithful and the righteous of previous nations as well as the Muslims, the text would have been weak, ambiguous and ineloquent if no term of specification had been added.

The words *min-kum* are also used to convey that previously only those had been made successors who were faithful and righteous, and that from among Muslims too the same kind of people would be made successors. Now if there are eyes which can see, then how do the words *min-kum* become superfluous and a repetition by taking the verse in a general sense? As faith and good works did not begin with the Muslims, and there had been believers and doers of good before them, how could there have been a clear distinction without the words *min-kum*? If it had only been said, God has promised those who believe and do good, it would not have been known which believers were being referred to, whether those from the Muslims or from the previous nations. And if only *min-kum* had been used, without "those who believe and do good", it would have been thought that wicked and evil-doing people could also be made *k̲h̲alīfas* by God, whereas the kingship and rulership of the wicked is by way of trial, and not by way of Divine election. The true *k̲h̲alīfas* of God, whether spiritual or temporal, are only those who are pious, faithful and doers of good.

Min-kum usually refers to all Muslims

The doubt that, taking this verse in a general sense, the concluding words, "whoever disbelieves after this, they are the transgressors", become completely senseless, is such a ridiculous idea that it evokes laughter. The plain and clear purport of the verse is that God, having given the glad tidings of the appearance of *k̲h̲alīfas*, then threatens the rebellious and the disobedient that. after the coming of the *k̲h̲alīfas*, who shall appear from time to time, anyone who takes to rebellion, and turns away from obedience and allegiance to them, is a transgressor of God's commands [*fāsiq*]. Where is the inconsistency in the meaning? It should also be made plain that corresponding to these words is the hadith in which the Holy Prophet Muhammad says: "He who does not recognise the spiritual guide [*imām*] of his time, he dies a death of ignorance", i.e. as the spiritual guides continue to appear in each age, those who do not acknowledge them will die the death akin to the death of disbelievers. The critic adduces the verse:

> "God said (to Jesus' disciples): I will send down the food to you, but whoever disbelieves afterwards from among you [*min-kum*], I will chastise him with a chastisement with which I will not chastise anyone among the nations." (5:115)

and draws from it the conclusion that the words *min-kum* here have been used specifically referring to those present. This, however, is to no advantage because we have already written that the predominant Quranic idiom, of which the entire Holy Book is full, is that this form of address is general, and commandments addressing "you" are for the whole of the Muslim people, not just the Companions. However, if at some place the context plainly and clearly limits the circle of those addressed, that is an exception. Hence, in the verse quoted above, that particular group of Jesus' disciples are addressed and answered who had asked for food to be sent down. The context shows that it was they who asked the question and they who were answered.

To assert that the Holy Quran contains frequent such examples is totally false and misleading. The words *min-kum* occur in the Holy Quran some 82 times, and there are about 600 instances of other kinds of address, but all these addresses, which convey commandments etc., are general. If the Holy Quran had addressed only the Companions, it would have become redundant after their passing away. The verse under dispute, which concerns the *k̲hilāfat* is in reality similar to the verse: "For them are glad tidings in this world's life" (10:64). Were these glad tidings limited to the Companions, or does anyone else also have a share of these?

Commandments addressed to Companions meant for all

The critic's statement that if anyone deviates from the actual meaning, which concerns only those who are addressed, and takes the words in a general sense, he must prove his departure by conclusive arguments, shows clearly that he knows nothing of the idiom of the Holy Quran and, indeed, of any Divine book. The trouble is that most hasty people are ever ready to object before giving proper thought. If the objector was sincerely interested in investigation, he should have looked at all the instances where apparently the Companions are addressed, and determined what is the most frequent and predominant idiom adopted by the Holy Quran. For, it is obvious that the correct meaning will be in accordance with the most predominant idiom, and it would not be allowable to deviate from it without support of the context.

Now let it be clear that the real idiom of the Holy Quran is generality in addressing those who were present, and it is on this basis that the 600 commands in the Holy Quran are taken to apply generally, and not limited to the Companions. So if a person goes against the common idiom and limits a particular commandment to the Companions, it would be his duty to establish, with strong arguments, that only the Companions had been addressed there and all others excluded. For instance, apparently addressing the Companions, God says in the Holy Quran:

> *1:* You should only serve God. *2:* Seek assistance through patience and prayer. *3:* Eat of the pure things. *4:* Do not make mischief. *5:* Establish the *Zakāt*. *6:* Keep up prayer. *7:* Face the *Maqām Ibrāhīm* in prayer. *8:* Try to excel one another in doing good. *9:* Remember Me and I will remember you. *10:* Give thanks to Me. *11:* Address your supplications to Me. *12:* Do not call dead those who are slain in the way of God. *13:* Do not dub as disbeliever and faithless he who says to you *Assalāmu 'Alaikum*. *14:* Eat of the good things, of what the earth grows. *15:* Follow not the footsteps of the devil. *16:* Fasting is made obligatory for you. *17:* He from among you who is sick or on a journey should complete the missed number of fasts afterwards. *18:* Do not swallow one another's property unjustly. *19:* Fear God so that you may be successful. *20:* Fight in the way of God those who fight you. *21:* Exceed not the limits in fighting. *22:* Be not aggressive, for God loves not the aggressive. *23:* Spend in the way of God. *24:*

> Do not kill yourselves on purpose. *25:* Do good to people, for God loves the doers of good. *26:* Perform the pilgrimage and the *'umra* for God. *27:* And make provision for yourselves on the pilgrimage journey, i.e. the advantage is that you will not ask of another, meaning that asking is degrading and one must plan to be safe from it. *28:* Enter into peace and Islam. *29:* Marry not the idolatrous women, till they become believers. *30:* O believing women, marry not the idolators till they believe. *31:* Send some good for your souls beforehand. *32:* Make not God by your oaths a hindrance to your doing good. *33:* Do not retain your wives in order to cause them injury. *34:* Those of you who die and leave wives behind, such women should keep themselves in waiting for four months and ten days. *35:* If you divorce women, let them go with kindness. *36:* If you apprehend fear (of the enemy), say your prayers while marching on foot or riding. *37:* If you show your charity to others, it is generally good, so that other people may follow your example. If you give it to the destitute secretly, then it is better for your own souls. *38:* When you lend to someone, have it written down. *39:* Fear God in repaying debt, and do not keep anything back. *40:* When you buy or sell, have some witnesses. *41:* If you are on a journey and cannot find a scribe, take something as a security (for a loan). *42:* Hold fast, all of you, to the rope of God and do not split. *43:* There should be such ones among you who enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. *44:* Hasten to forgiveness from God. *45:* If the wife of any of you dies, yours is a half of her property if she has no children, but if she does have children, you shall receive a quarter after complying with the will.

We have quoted these few commandments by way of example. A person having even a little sense can see that although the address is apparently to the Companions, in fact all Muslims are obliged to act upon these commandments, not merely the Companions and none else. Thus the real and true Quranic idiom, of which the entire Holy Book is full, is that those addressed in it are really and actually all Muslims to come into existence till the Day of Judgment, though on the face of it the address appears to be directed towards the Companions. Consequently, the person who claims that the promise or the warning[21] is limited only to the Companions is going against the common idiom of the Quran, and until he shows full evidence of this claim he will be a deviant in adopting this view. Was the Quran revealed only for the Companions? If the promises and warnings of the Quran, and all its commandments, are limited to them, it would be as if those who come afterwards have no connection whatever with the Quran. We seek refuge in God from this senseless proposition!

Was *khilafat* to last only thirty years

To argue that it is said in the Hadith that *k̲h̲ilāfat* shall be for thirty years is strange logic. When the Holy Quran says: "A multitude from among the earlier ones, and a multitude from among the later ones",[22] what kind of sense is it to adduce a hadith against it and take its meaning as contradicting the Quran? If one relies on the Hadith, then one should first follow those reports which much surpass this hadith in authenticity and reliability; for instance, the sayings in *Ṣaḥīh al-Buk̲h̲ārī* giving the news of the appearance of certain *k̲h̲alīfas* in the latter days, especially the *k̲h̲alīfa* regarding whom it is written in *Buk̲h̲ārī* that a voice shall issue forth for him from heaven, proclaiming: "This is the *k̲h̲alīfa* of God, the rightly-guided one". Now consider, of what a high standard and rank is this report, contained in the book which is called "the most correct of books after the Quran". But as to the hadith which the critic has put forward, scholars have raised many kinds of objections against it, and they have doubts about its authenticity.

Has not the critic considered that the prophecies about the coming of certain *k̲h̲alīfas* in the latter days — that *Hārit̲h̲*[23] shall come, the *Mahdī* shall come, the heavenly *k̲h̲alīfa* shall come — are contained in Hadith and not in some other book. It is proven from the Hadith that there are three ages: first, the period of the righteous *k̲h̲ilāfat*, then the "age of corruption" in which there were to be tyrannical kings, and after that the last days which would be on the pattern of the times of prophethood. The Holy Prophet has gone so far as to say that the early days of his followers and the last days would be very similar, and that these two ages are like the rain: it is full of such good and blessings that one knows not whether the blessings lie more in the beginning or in the end.

SAINTS — LIVING EXAMPLES OF SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

It should also be made clear here that God Almighty says in the Holy Quran:

انا نحن نزلنا الذكر و انا له لحافظون.

"It is We Who revealed this Book, and it is We Who shall guard its revelation" (15:9). This makes it plain that this Word shall endure forever, and there shall constantly be arising those who shall keep its teachings fresh and convey its benefits to the people. If it is asked, What is the function of the existence of the Quran, the continuation of which constitutes the real preservation of the Holy Book, it is clear from the following verse:

هو الذى بعث فى الاميين رسولا منهم يتلوا عليهم آياته و يزكيهم و
يعلمهم الكتاب و الحكمة.

> ("He it is Who raised among the illiterates a Messenger from among themselves, who recites to them His messages and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the wisdom." — .62:2)

The substance of this verse is that there are two main functions of the Quran, to convey which the Holy Prophet came. Firstly, the "wisdom" of the Quran, i.e. the knowledge and the fine points of the Quran, and secondly, the spiritual efficacy of the Quran which purifies the soul. The guarding of the Quran is not only to take great care of its manuscripts — for such work was done even by the Jews and the Christians in their early days, so much so that the letters of the Torah had been counted — but what is meant here is the preserving of the function and the efficacy of the Quran along with its textual preservation. And, according to the Divine custom, that can only happen if there come, from time to time, deputies of the Holy Prophet possessing all the blessings of messengership by way of image, having been granted all the favours given to the prophets. This great affair is referred to in the verse:

> "God has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will surely make them successors in the earth as He made those before them to be successors. And He will surely establish for them their religion, which He has chosen for them, and that He will surely give them security in exchange after their fear. They will serve Me, not associating anything with Me. And whoever disbelieves after this, they are the transgressors." (24:55)

This verse, in reality, explains the other verse: "It is We Who revealed this Book, and it is We Who shall guard it" (15:9), and answers the question as to how and in what form shall the guarding of the Quran be done. Thus God Almighty says that He shall send *khalīfas* of the Holy Prophet from time to time. The word *khalīfa* has been adopted to indicate that they shall be heirs of the Holy Prophet and partake of his blessings, as used to happen in the earlier ages; the faith shall be revived at their hands and security shall be established after the prevalence of fear, i.e. they shall come at times when there would be disruption in the house of Islam. Then, after their coming, those who rebel against them would be the evil-doers and the wicked. This is a reply to the point raised by some ignorant people who ask, Is it obligatory upon us to acknowledge the saints [*auliyā*]? God says that certainly it is obligatory, and those who oppose them are transgressors, if they die in the state of opposition.

Coming of Reformers despite perfection of Islam

At this point, the critic also writes that God has stated, "This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favour to you" (5:3), and he raises the objection that since religion has reached perfection and the favour has been completed, there is then no need of a *mujaddid,* or of a prophet. But it is regrettable that, by believing this, the critic has raised an objection against the Holy Quran itself, for the Quran has promised the appearance of *k͟halīfas* among the Muslims, as has just been mentioned, and said that in their times the faith shall be consolidated, uncertainty and trepidation shall depart, and security shall be established after fear. Furthermore, if after the perfection of religion, no action is right and appropriate, then according to the critic the thirty-year *k͟hilāfat* would also be baseless, for when religion has been perfected there is no need for any other person.

It is a pity that the uninformed critic has unjustifiably adduced the verse, "This day I have perfected for you your religion". When have we said that *mujaddids* and saints come into the world to remove something from the religion or to add to it? On the contrary, we say that when, after the passage of a period of time, the dust of corrupted notions settles upon the holy teachings, and the face of the pure truth is hidden, then to show that beautiful face there come *mujaddids,* Divinely inspired saints and spiritual *k͟halīfas*. It is not known from where and from whom the poor critic heard that *mujaddids* and spiritual *k͟halīfas* come into the world to amend and revoke the religion to some extent. No, they do not come to abrogate the religion, but to display its shine and brilliance.

The critic's doubt, as to their need, has only arisen because he does not care about his religion, nor has he ever thought about what Islam is, what constitutes the progress of Islam, how and through which means can true progress be made, and in what state must a person be for him to be called a Muslim in the true sense. This is the reason why the critic considers it sufficient that the Quran exists, scholars of the religion exist, and there exists a natural feeling in most people's hearts towards Islam, and so there is no need for a *mujaddid.* Unfortunately however, the critic does not understand that *mujaddids* and spiritual *k͟halīfas* are needed by the Muslim people in the same way as were the prophets required from ancient times. No one can deny that

Moses, peace be upon him, was a prophet and messenger, and his Torah was complete as the teaching for the Israelite people. And just as the Holy Quran contains the verse "This day I have perfected for you your religion", similarly the Torah contains passages which mean that the Israelites were granted a perfect and glorious book called the Torah. The Quran, too, contains such a description of the Torah,[24] but despite this, after the Torah there came hundreds of prophets among the Israelites who brought no new book with them. Rather, the object of the advent of those prophets was to draw towards the real spirit of the Torah the people of their times who had fallen away from its teachings, and to bless with a living faith those in whose hearts there was doubt, godlessness and faithlessness. So God, the Almighty, Himself says in the Holy Quran:

و لقد آتینا موسٰی الکتاب و قفینا من بعده بالرسل.

("And We indeed gave Moses the book and We sent messengers after him, one after another ..." — 2:87)

The meaning is: We gave Moses the Torah, and then after this book We sent many messengers to support and confirm the teaching of the Torah. Similarly, God says elsewhere:

ثُم ارسلنا رسلنا تترًا.

"Then We sent Our messengers one after another" (23:44). So all these verses make it clear that the way of God is that, having sent His book, He necessarily sends prophets for its support and confirmation. Thus in support of the Torah, as many as four hundred prophets appeared at one time, to whose advent the Bible bears witness to this day.[25]

Abundance of prophets and saints for guidance

The real secret underlying the sending of so many apostles is that God has given an emphatic covenant that whoever denies His true book, his punishment is the eternal hell, as He says:

و الذین کفروا و کذبوا بآیاتنا اولئك اصحاب النار هم فیها خالدون.

"And as to those who disbelieve in, and reject, Our messages, they are the Companions of the fire; in it they will abide" (2:39).

Now while the punishment for rejecting the Divine book was so severe, and on the other hand the question of prophethood and Divine revelation was so subtle — in fact, the existence of God was so ultra-subtle that unless one's eye was lit with God-given light it was certainly not possible to obtain true and pure knowledge of Him, let alone the acceptance of His messengers and His book — for this reason the mercy of God required that the blind creation be helped very greatly. It was not sufficient just to send a messenger and a book once, and then despite the passage of a long time, to consign the deniers to eternal hell for rejecting beliefs which, to the later generations, are not more than mere hallowed and fine statements. It is, in reality, very plain and evident to the thinking person that, for applying such a severe penalty, God, Who bears the names Beneficent and Merciful, could not adopt the law that, without conclusive arguments having been fully conveyed to them, He should consign to eternal hell people of various lands who heard the name of the Quran and the Apostle centuries afterwards, and who do not know Arabic and are unable to see the virtues of the Quran. Whose conscience can accept that, without it being proved to someone that the Holy Quran is from God, that person should have the knife run across his throat? This is the reason why God has promised eternal *khalīfas,* so that by acquiring the light of prophethood in a reflective sense [*ẓill*][26] they would render the world answerable, and show to people the merits and the pure blessings of the Holy Quran.

It should also be remembered that for every age the conclusive proving of the case for Islam takes place in a different sense, and the *mujaddid* of the time comes with the powers, faculties and qualities upon which depends the reformation of the prevalent evils. God will ever continue to do this, as long as He pleases, so that signs of righteousness and reform remain in the world. These matters are not without proof; on the contrary, repeated observations testify to them. Leaving aside the prophets, apostles and saints who appeared in other lands, if one casts a glance at just the prophets, apostles and saints of the Israelites, it is learnt from their books that in a period of fourteen hundred years, i.e. from Moses to Jesus, there appeared among them thousands of prophets and Divinely-inspired saints who, like true servants, girded up their loins and remained engaged in the service of the Torah. Hence the Quran bears witness to all these statements, and so does the Bible. Those prophets did not bring new scriptures, nor did they teach new religions. They were merely servants of the Torah, and used to appear in times when godlessness, loss of faith, wickedness and hard-heartedness would spread among the Israelites.

Need for Divinely-inspired saints among Muslims

Now a thinker should consider that if, for the limited law of Moses which was not meant for all nations on earth nor did it extend to the Day of Judgment, God took the precautions of sending thousands of prophets for its revival, and these ever-appearing prophets showed signs which made the Israelites see God anew, as it were, why should the Muslim nation, which is known as the "best of nations" and has come down from the best of messengers, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, be considered so luckless that God should have cast a glance of mercy towards it and showed it heavenly light for only thirty years[27] and then turned His face away from it. Then this nation spent centuries in separation from its Holy Prophet; troubles of thousands of kinds arose, great shocks came, falsehood of many types spread, a whole world launched attacks upon the true faith, all blessings and miracles were denied, and the chosen one was rejected, yet God did not cast His glance at this nation again, nor did He ever feel mercy towards it. Nor did it occur to Him that these people were also weak mortals like the Israelites, and that their plants too, like those of the Jews, are constantly dependent on being watered from heaven. Could the Honourable God, Who sent this Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, to defeat the evils of all times, do such a thing? Can we imagine that, whereas the mercy of God was upon the earlier nations, so that having sent the Torah He then sent thousands of apostles and saints for its support and for the repeated revival of the hearts, yet this nation was a victim of wrath, so that having revealed the Quran, God forgot all these things and left the learned men of the faith to their own understanding and judgment forever? As regards Moses it was clearly stated:

و كلم الله موسٰى تكليماً. رسلاً مبشرين و منذرين لئلا يكون للناس
على الله حجة بعد الرسل. و كان الله عزيزاً حكيماً.

> ("And to Moses God addressed His word, speaking (to him) — messengers, bearers of good news and warners, so that the people may have no plea against God after the coming of the messengers. And God is ever Mighty, Wise." — 4:164–165)

The meaning is that God spoke to Moses, and sent in his support and confirmation messengers who were bearers of good news and warners, so that people may have no excuse left, and seeing the continuous group of prophets they may come to have heart-felt faith in the Torah. It is also said:

و رسلاً قد قصصناهم عليك من قبل و رسلاً لم نقصصهم عليك.

"We sent many messengers, some We have mentioned and others We have not mentioned" (4:164).

But for the seekers of truth in Islam, no such arrangements were made, as if the mercy and grace of God which was upon Moses' people is not upon this nation. It is obvious that after the passage of a long period of time the miracles and signs of earlier days always become mere narratives, and the later generations, seeing their own contemporaries devoid of every miraculous affair, eventually begin to have doubts about the former miracles. Moreover, as the example of thousands of Israelite prophets is before one's eyes, this nation would feel even more despondent and, finding itself ill-fated, would look to the Israelites with envy, or it would become involved in evil thoughts and consider even their events to be mere myths.

Perfection of religion does not rule out its defence

To assert that because thousands of prophets had appeared before it and plenty of miracles too had taken place, so this nation did not stand in need of signs, miracles and blessings, and therefore God kept it deprived of all of these, are just words said by those people who have no care for faith. On the contrary, man is extremely weak and always stands in need of strengthening his faith, and to this end one's own constructed arguments never work unless it is realised afresh that God exists. Admittedly, hollow faith which cannot restrain one from evil deeds can, of course, be maintained by the use of reason and observation.

It should also be remembered here that the completion of the religion does not imply that its legitimate defence should be totally abandoned. Suppose, for instance, that someone builds a house, constructs all its rooms elegantly, and fulfils all its requirements as a building to the best standard; then after a time storms blow, rains come, dust and dirt settle on the decoration of the house, and its beauty is hidden; if then one of his descendants should want to clean and wash the house but he is forbidden on the grounds that the building was complete, it is obvious that to forbid him is sheer folly. Sadly, such critics do not realise that completion is one thing, and the periodic cleaning of a completed building is another. It should be remembered that the *mujaddids* do not add anything to the religion, nor take anything away from it; they reinstate lost faith in the hearts. And to say that it is not obligatory to believe in the *mujaddids* is to deviate from the command of God because He says: "And whoever disbelieves after this, they are the transgressors" (24:55), i.e. after the sending of the *k͟halīfas,* whoever remains a denier of them, he is among the transgressors.

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENTS

We now briefly give a summary of this discourse. It is that the arguments given below prove it to be essential that, after the death of the Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, there should arise among the Muslim people, at times of troubles and tribulations, reformers who are assigned the particular task, out of the many tasks of the prophets, that they call to the true religion, and remove every innovation that has been mixed with the religion, and show people the truth of the faith from every angle, through having received heavenly light, and draw people to truth, love and purity through their own holy example. These arguments are as below.

First argument — on logical grounds

Firstly, metaphysical and spiritual questions are extremely delicate and subtle, as if one has to repose belief in all matters ethereal and above the scope of reason, since no one has ever seen God or paradise or hell or met angels; and besides this, Divine commandments run contrary to desires of the self, prohibiting the things which the lower self enjoys. Therefore, logically it is not only the best way, but in fact essential, that the holy prophets of God, who come with law and scripture, and possess within themselves a holy power and influence, should have a long life so that always and in every century they can give each new generation of their followers the privilege of their company and meeting, and by taking them under their charge and beneficent wings, provide them with the blessing, light and spiritual knowledge which they had conveyed in earlier times. And if this cannot be so, then their successors, who should possess their accomplishments, must always arise at times of mischief and trouble, and be able to explain the fine points and truths of the Book of God through revelation and inspiration, and demonstrate the recorded truths in the form of actual experience, taking the seekers of truth to the stage of certainty. Thus man, who is prey to doubt and forgetfulness, should not remain deprived of their (the prophets') real spiritual benefits. For it is plain and evident that when the prophet of an age reaches his end, and then all those who witnessed his blessings pass away, all the matters of observation assume the form of recorded narratives. Then, in the view of the people of the next century, the moral qualities of that prophet, his acts of worship, patience, steadfastness, truthfulness, purity and devotion, and all the signs of Divine support, supernatural manifestations and miracles, which argued for the authenticity of his prophethood and the truth of his claim, are something like stories, and for this reason the depth of faith and fervour for obedience to be found in those who see the prophet is not seen in others to the same extent.

Companions of the Holy Prophet

It is clear that the depth of true faith shown by the Companions of the Holy Prophet, and the great sincerity with which they sacrificed their possessions, lives and names in the path of Islam, was not to be found even in the people of the second century, namely the *Tabi'īn,* let alone the later centuries. What was the reason for this? It was just this: that the Companions, God be pleased with them, had seen the face of this Man of Truth whose being a lover of God was testified to spontaneously even by the tongues of the disbelieving Quraish. And seeing his daily devotions and prostrations full of love, and witnessing his state of absorption in Divine obedience, perfection of love for God, bright signs upon the face of love, and the aura of Divine light upon his holy countenance, they used to say: "Muhammad is a true lover of his Lord". And the Companions not only saw that truthfulness, love and sincerity, but corresponding to the love which surged like a river in the heart of our Leader, Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, they also witnessed God's love (for the Holy Prophet) in the form of extraordinary Divine assistance. Then they realised that God exists, and their hearts cried out that that God was with this man.

They saw so many Divine wonders and witnessed so many heavenly signs that they remained in no doubt whatever that a Higher Being actually exists, Whose name is God, and in Whose hand lies every affair, and for Whom nothing is impossible. It was for this reason that they displayed all those deeds of truth and purity, and made those sacrifices, which a man cannot do unless all his doubts and uncertainties are banished. They saw with their own eyes that that Holy Being is only pleased if man enters Islam and renders obedience to His honourable Holy Prophet with his very body and soul. Then after that perfect faith, the obedience which they showed, the deeds they did out of the fervour of that obedience, and the readiness with which they offered their lives to their venerated Guide, were such that it is never possible for man to attain them until that same season of spring is before his eyes as had come upon the Companions. And since it is impossible to produce these accomplishments without the existence of these means, and to obtain sure salvation without these qualities is also impossible, it was essential that God, Who has called everyone to salvation, should make this kind of arrangement for every century so that His servants may not be deprived of the grades of perfect faith in any age.

Need for saintly teachers of Divine word

To say that the Quran and the Hadith are sufficient for us, and that association with the righteous is not necessary, is itself against the Quranic teaching because Almighty God says: "And be with the truthful ones [*ṣādiqīn,* plural of *ṣādiq*]" — (9:119). The "truthful" are those who recognised the truth through insight, and who then became established upon it heart and soul. And this high degree of insight is not possible unless heavenly assistance comes to take one to a high position of sure faith. Thus according to this meaning, the "truthful ones" are the prophets, messengers, Divinely inspired saints and the completely perfect holy men, upon whom heavenly light fell and who saw God Almighty in this very world with the eye of certainty. And this holy verse indicates that the world is never devoid of the existence of the truthful because the permanence of the command, "Be with the truthful ones", implies the perpetual existence of the truthful.

Besides this, observation clearly shows that those people who spend their lives indifferent to association with the truthful cannot be cleansed of their physical desires by their own knowledge and skills. And they cannot attain even that grade of faith where there is heart-felt belief in the existence of God. They do not have the same faith in God as they do in the wealth locked away in their safes or the property which is in their possession. Taking arsenic terrifies them because they know with certainty that it is a fatal poison, but they are not afraid of the poison of sins, although they read in the Quran everyday: "Whoever comes guilty to his Lord, for him is surely hell. He will neither die therein, nor live" (20:74). So the truth is that the person who knows not God, knows not the Quran either. It is, of course, also true that the Quran has been revealed for the purpose of guidance, but its guidance is bound up with the person of the man to whom the Quran was revealed, or the man who has been appointed as his successor by God. If the Quran would have been sufficient by itself, God had the power to have it written down upon the leaves of trees naturally, or it could have descended from the sky in written form. However, God did not do this; rather, He did not send the Quran into the world until the teacher of the Quran was sent into the world. Open the Holy Quran and see in how many places there are verses to the effect:

يعلمهم الكتاب و الحكمة.

i.e. that Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, teaches people the Quran and its wisdom. And in another place it states:

لا يمسه الا المطهرون.

("None touches it except the purified ones." — 56:79)

i.e. the truths and the fine points of the Quran are disclosed only to those who have been purified. Hence these verses clearly prove that, to comprehend the Quran, there is the need for a teacher whom God has purified with His own hand. If there were no need of a teacher in order to learn the Quran, there would have been no need of one in the early days (of Islam) either.

Saintly teachers required in every age

If it is said that in the beginning a teacher was required to explain the teachings of the Quran, but since they have been explained, what is the necessity of one now, the answer is that explained questions again require elucidation after a passage of time, and besides this, the Muslim people face new problems in every age. The Quran is certainly a reservoir of all knowledge, but that does not imply that all the knowledge in it should be disclosed in just one age. On the contrary, corresponding to the kinds of problems that are faced the appropriate Quranic knowledge is disclosed, and corresponding to the issues of every age, for the resolving of those issues spiritual teachers are sent who are the heirs of the apostles and who attain the qualities of the messengers by way of image. And the *mujaddid* whose work bears striking similarity to the appointed task of one of the apostles, is called by the name of that apostle in the sight of God.

New teachers are also required because some of the teaching of the Holy Quran has to be given through actual condition, not words. And the Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, who is the premier teacher and the real heir to this throne, explained these deep and subtle points to his Companions through his own experience. For instance, God's saying that He is the knower of the unseen, He is the answerer of prayers, He is the powerful, He is the grantor of supplications, He makes the seekers receive true light, He sends revelation to His true servants, and He breathes His spirit into whomsoever of His servants as He pleases — all these things are such that unless the teacher himself is an illustration of them, they cannot be understood in any way. So it is obvious that the formal *ulama* of the religion, who are themselves blind, cannot explain these teachings; indeed, they are constantly making their students doubtful of the greatness of Islam. They assert that these matters (spiritual) are not things of the future but of the past, and such statements of theirs give one to understand that Islam is no longer a living religion, and there is now no way to attain its true teachings.

It is obvious, however, that if God's plan for His creation is that He shall always make them drink of the fountain of the Holy Quran, then He will undoubtedly show regard to His ancient laws as He has been doing from the days of old. And if the teaching of the Quran is limited merely to the extent to which the thought of an accomplished and deep-thinking philosopher is confined, and heavenly teaching which can only be explained through a living example is not to be found anywhere in it, then the advent of the Quran is, God forbid, fruitless. But I know that if someone considers even for a moment the question as to what is the distinction between the teaching of the prophets and the teaching of wise thinkers, he will not find any distinctive feature other than the fact that a great part of the teachings of the prophets is beyond the scope of reason and cannot be understood in any way except through teaching and elucidation by actual condition. This part can only be impressed upon one's mind by persons who have had the experience. For instance, questions relating to how the angels take the soul at death, and the manner in which they take it to heaven, the questioning in the grave, the nature of paradise and hell and the "straight bridge", the bearing of the *'arsh* of God by four angels and by eight angels on the Day of Judgment, God's sending His revelation to His servants or His opening the door of visions to them — all this is teaching conveyed through actual experience, and cannot be understood through words and talk alone. Considering this, I repeat that if Almighty God has willed for His servants that this part of the teaching of His book should not be confined to just the first age, then He would undoubtedly have made arrangements to constantly send teachers of this side of the teaching. For, that teaching can never be understood except through the agency of teachers who have attained the stage of experience, and the world stumbles in every elementary matter. So if in Islam, after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, no teachers have come possessing the light of prophethood by way of reflection, then it is as if God intentionally made the Quran useless by taking away from the world, quite soon, those who understood it truly and properly.

Guarding Quranic teachings

However, this is opposed to His promise as expressed by Him as follows:

انا نحن نزلنا الذكر و انا له لحافظون.

We have revealed the Quran, and We shall ever keep on guarding it (15:9). Now I cannot see, if those do not remain who understand the Quran, and those who have faith in it as a matter of certainty and experience disappear into nothing, how the Quran can have been guarded. Does "guarding" mean that many copies of the Quran would be calligraphed beautifully and locked away in trunks till the Day of Judgment, rather like buried treasure which is of no use to anyone but lies protected underground? Can anyone consider this to be God's intent in this verse? If this is the purpose, then such guarding is no great work; in fact, it is a joke, and to speak of this guarding is to invite ridicule from the opponents, because if the real purpose is missing, what good is physical preservation. It is possible that there may be a manuscript of the Gospels or the Torah, similarly preserved, lying in a ditch somewhere. And in the world there are thousands of books which are certainly, without any loss or addition, known to be works of their authors. What is the great merit in this, and what is the special benefit accruing to the Muslims?

Although it cannot be denied that the textual preservation of the Quran is of a higher standard than for any other book in the world, and it is also miraculous, still it can never be imagined, in the case of God Who looks to matters spiritual, that by guarding is meant merely the preservation of words and letters. In fact, the word *dhikr*[28] clearly testifies that the Quran shall be preserved in its capacity as the *dhikr* till the Day of Judgment, and its true *dhākirs* (those reminding people of its teachings) shall ever continue to appear. There is another verse clearly arguing to this effect, and it is as follows:

بل هو آيات بينات فى صدور الذين اوتوا العلم.

"It is clear verses, which are in the hearts of those who possess knowledge" (29:49). It is obvious that this verse means that the believers have been granted the knowledge of the Quran, and also the ability to act upon it. And since the repository of the Quran is the hearts of the believers, the verse "We have revealed the Reminder and We shall ever keep on guarding it" can have no meaning except that the Quran will not be effaced from the hearts as the Torah and the Gospel were effaced from the hearts of the Jews and the Christians. And although the Torah and the

Gospel were in their hands and their boxes, yet these were removed from their hearts, i.e. their hearts did not remain established upon these books, and they did not keep and preserve the Torah and the Gospel in their hearts. To conclude, this verse is loudly proclaiming that no portion of the teaching of the Quran will be lost or ruined, and just as it was planted in the hearts on the first day, so shall this state of affairs continue till the Day of Judgment.

Second argument — on the basis of the Quran

Just as reason considers it essential and important that for the permanent teaching and exposition of the Divine books it is necessary that, like prophets, there constantly arise, from time to time, men inspired by God, recipients of revelation, and possessors of Divine knowledge, similarly when we look at the Quran and read it with a careful eye it too declares with a loud voice that the perpetual coming of spiritual teachers has been decreed in God's ancient will. Consider, God Almighty says:

و اما ما ينفع الناس فيمكث فى الارض.

"Whatever thing benefits mankind, it remains in the world" (13:17). Now it is obvious that the class most benefitting mankind are the prophets who, by signs, miracles, prophecies, truth, knowledge, and their own example of righteousness, strengthen the faith of people and convey spiritual benefit to seekers of truth. It is also obvious that they do not remain in the world for a great length of time, but are taken from this world after spending a short life here. However, this does not go against the meaning of the verse, nor is it possible that the word of God be against facts. So, when applied to prophets, the meaning of this verse would be that they continue to exist in terms of reflection [*ẓill*], and at every time of need God raises some servant of His in their likeness and similitude, as a reflection, who causes them to have perpetual life by being in their mould. For the continuation of this existence in terms of reflection, God has taught His servants the following prayer:

اهدنا الصراط المستقيم. صراط الذين انعمت عليهم.

"O our Lord, show us that right path which is the way of those servants of Thine upon whom are Thy favours" (1:5–6). And it is obvious that God's favour to the prophets, for the seeking of which there is a command in this prayer, is not of monetary form but it is the favour of light, blessings, love, sure faith, miracles, heavenly assistance, recognition, perfect knowledge, revelation and visions. God had commanded the Muslim people to seek this favour only after He had first decided to grant it to them. So this verse too proves openly that God has made this nation the heir to the prophets, in the sense of reflection, so that the prophets continue to exist forever in this sense, and the world never be deprived of their presence. And God has not only commanded the saying of this prayer but also given the promise in a verse as follows:

و الذين جاهدوا فينا لنهدينهم سبلنا.

"Those who strive hard in Our path" — which is the straight path — "We shall show them Our ways" (29:69). It is obvious that the ways to God are only those which were shown to the prophets.

Then there are some other verses from which it is proved that God has indeed decreed that spiritual teachers, who are the heirs to the prophets, shall always continue to arise. These are as follows:

> وعد الله الذين آمنوا منكم و عملوا الصالحات ليستخلفنهم فى الارض
> كما استخلف الذين من قبلهم.
>
> "God has promised you, O believers of the nation of Muhammad, that He will make you *khalīfas* in the earth as was done with those before you." (24:55)
>
> و لا يزال الذين كفروا تصيبهم بما صنعوا قارعة او تحل قريباً من
> دارهم حتى يأتى وعد الله. ان الله لا يخلف الميعاد.
>
> "And disasters" — of various kinds, physical and spiritual — "will continue to afflict the disbelievers,

> or pass close to their abodes, until the promise of God comes to pass, and God does not fail in His promises." (13:31)
>
> و ما كنا معذبين حتى نبعث رسولاً.
>
> "And We do not send punishment upon a people until We raise a messenger." (17:15)

If a person examines these verses with care and thought, how can I say that he will not understand the point that God has given a clear promise of a perpetual *khilāfat* for the Muslim nation. If this *khilāfat* was not to be perpetual, what was the meaning of likening it to the successors in the Mosaic order? If it was to come to an end forever after the 'Righteous khilāfat' of thirty years' duration, it would imply that God had certainly not ordained that He would keep the doors of blessings open upon the Muslims forever, because the demise of the spiritual order means the death of the faith, and that religion cannot be called *living* whose adherents admit with their own tongues that it has been lying dead for thirteen centuries. However, God has most certainly not willed for this faith that the light of true life which was in the heart of the Holy Prophet Muhammad should be transferred as inheritance to those outside.

Khilafat till eternity, not just thirty years

It is a pity that those who hold this view do not reflect upon the word *khalīfa* which is related to *istikhlāf*, for *khalīfa* is applied to *a successor,* and only that person can be a successor to the Prophet in the true sense who possesses within him the Apostle's qualities by way of being a reflection. For this reason, the Holy Prophet did not want the word *khalīfa* to be applied to tyrannical monarches, because the *khalīfa* is in reality the image of the Apostle. And since no human being lives forever, God willed that the prophets, who are the best and most superior of all the beings of the world, should continue to exist permanently, by way of reflection, till the Day of Judgment. So for this purpose God instituted the *khilāfat* in order that the world should not be deprived of the blessings of apostleship in any age whatever.

Therefore, the person who accepts the *khilāfat* of only thirty years ignores its real object through his folly. He does not know that it was most certainly not God's purpose that it is only essential to continue the blessings of apostleship after the Holy Prophet's death through the *khalīfas* for a mere thirty years, and after that He would not care a whit even if the world was facing destruction. In fact, in the early days the *khalīfas* were needed for not much more than spreading the power of Islam, because the lights and blessings of prophethood were still being disseminated newly and freshly, and thousands of miracles had just then poured down like rain. Had God so willed, it was not beyond His law to extend the life of the Holy Prophet by thirty years, instead of having four *khalīfas*. At the end of this thirty year period the Holy Prophet would have reached 93 years of age, and this is not much more than the ages attained in those times, nor is it in excess of the law of nature regarding human life span which we observe before us.

Can sound sense propose the despicable idea about the Merciful, Kind God, that He cared about this Muslim people for only thirty years and then left them wandering permanently, and the light which from ancient days He had been showing within the followers of previous prophets in the mirror of *khilāfat*, He did not approve of showing for this people? Most certainly not. And the following verse bears decisive witness to the *khilāfat:*

> "We indeed wrote in the Book after the Reminder
> that My righteous servants shall inherit the earth."
> (21:105)

For, it is clearly proclaiming that the Islamic *khilāfat* is perpetual. The word "inherit" implies perpetuity, because if the wicked have the last turn, they would be the inheritors of the earth, not the righteous, and the heir to anything is he who comes last of all.

Then the following point should also be considered. Given that God had explained by use of an analogy that He would raise *khalīfas* among the Muslim people in the same manner as He raised successors after Moses, one should see what course did

God follow after the death of Moses: did He send successors for only thirty years, or did He extend this series for fourteen hundred years? Then again, as the grace of God upon our Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, was far greater than that which was upon Moses, as He Himself said, "The grace of God upon thee is very great" (4:113), and He also said regarding this nation, "You are the best nation raised for mankind" (3:109), how could it be that the series of successors of Moses should be continued for fourteen hundred years, but here the *khilāfat* terminate after a mere thirty years? If the Muslim people are devoid forever of the spiritual lights of *khilāfat,* let anyone explain the meaning of the verse: "You are the best nation raised for mankind". If it is desired to keep this nation blind forever, and if the object is to keep this faith dead, what is the meaning of saying that it is the best and that it has been raised for the welfare and guidance of mankind? Can the blind lead the blind? So, O people who are called Muslims, ponder for God's sake: this verse means just that spiritual life and inner vision shall remain in you always, till the Day of Judgment, and followers of other religions shall receive light from you. And this spiritual life and inner vision which has the capability to invite people of other faiths towards the truth — this is just the thing which in other words is known as *khilāfat.* How can you then assert that the *khilāfat,* after having continued for only thirty years, vanished into nothing? Fear God, fear God, fear God!

Now it should be remembered that although there are many verses of this kind in the Holy Quran, giving the glad tidings of a perpetual *khilāfat* among the Muslim people, and Hadith is full of reports about this as well, for the moment this much will suffice for those who accept proven facts like a great treasure. There could be no worse misgiving about Islam than to consider it to be a dead religion and to believe its blessings to be limited to only the first generation. Does the Book which opens the door to perpetual blessings teach the disheartening lesson that there is no blessing or *khilāfat* to look forward to, but that all has been left behind? Prophets certainly cannot arise among the Muslims, but if *khalīfas* of the Holy Prophet do not come either, showing the marvels of spiritual life from time to time, then the spirituality of Islam comes to an end. In that case, such a faith can bear no comparison to the spiritual power and glory of the Mosaic religion in which thousands of spiritual *k̲halīfas* continued to arise over a period of fourteen centuries. It is lamentable that our critics do not give the least thought to the point that in such a case Islam proves to be very inferior as regards its spirituality, and the Master-Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, is shown to be no great prophet, God forbid, and the Quran does not prove to be a book whose light is very effective. It would then turn out to be an absurd, meaningless and baseless claim to say that this nation is the best of nations and is to give spiritual benefit to other nations for all time, that the Quran is the most perfect and complete of all Divine books in its accomplishments and effect, and that this Apostle is the most excellent of all the messengers of God in his power of purification and of perfecting the moral character of others. It would also give rise to the great trouble that that part of the teachings of the Quran which aims to make man resemble prophets in terms of spiritual light and attainments, will be considered to be abrogated forever, because if this people do not possess the capability to produce the spiritual accomplishments of *k̲hilāfat* within themselves, then any teaching which enjoins the attainment of this status would be just useless. In fact, even asking the question, Is Islam now a dead religion forever in which there do not arise persons whose Divine signs and inspiration are substitutes for the miracles and revelation of the prophets, makes one tremble, let alone that some Muslims should entertain such a belief, God forbid. May God guide those people who are prisoners to such heretic ideas.

Present Muslim condition like Jews of Jesus' time

Now it has been proved from the Holy Quran that in this blessed Muslim nation a system of perpetual *k̲hilāfat* has been established in the manner and likeness of the one which was established in the dispensation of Moses, and there is merely a verbal difference to the effect that at that time, for the support of the Mosaic religion, there used to arise prophets, but now inspired saints [sing. *muḥaddath*] come. This proof implies the acceptance of the proposition that just as in the last days of the Mosaic law a prophet arose named Jesus, in a time when the moral condition of the Jews had deteriorated completely — they had strayed very far from real piety, virtue, mutual sympathy, unity and true godliness, their knowledge and thought was confined merely to formalism and letter-worship, and in their worldly position they had become weak and humiliated — similarly it is necessary that among the Muslim people too there should arise a *muḥaddath,* in the likeness of that prophet and of his time, when they have also degenerated in the same manner as that in which the Jews had in the time of Jesus. And if the matter is scrutinised closely and investigated, it is clearly and definitely discovered that the age in which a like of Jesus should have arisen among the Muslims, by virtue of the perfect and complete analogy between the series of Mosaic successors and the *khalīfas* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, is this very era in which we are living. For, the space of time from Moses to Jesus was approximately fourteen hundred years, and the present time is also the fourteenth century from our Holy Prophet. Moses' people had so thoroughly gone astray by the fourteenth century that righteousness and virtue had altogether disappeared. The Jewish divines were pre-occupied with needless dissensions and selfish controversies, much evil and wickedness had spread among them, and their worldly condition had suffered great disintegration as well. Precisely this is the condition of the Muslim people at this time, and events before our eyes are plainly testifying that in reality this people and its divines are following in the footsteps of the Jews of the time of Jesus. And they resemble the Jews of that time not only in having lost virtue, piety, spirituality and the ability to see the truth, but worldly misfortune is also with them, as was the case then. Just as at that time the Jewish states had been destroyed by the Roman emperors, fulfilling the description "Abasement and humiliation were stamped upon them" (the Quran, 2:61), and finding themselves weak and helpless the Jews were awaiting a Messiah who would come as a king and fight the Romans, for this was the promise given at the close of the Torah, so are these Muslim people mostly and predominantly in a condition of worldly misfortune. If there is a state, it has been so weakened by internal disagreements, disloyalty on the part of ministers and officials, and the indolence, negligence, ignorance, lack of knowledge, moral depravity and idleness of the rulers, that it appears to be close to breathing its last. And these people too, like the Jews, were expecting that the Promised Messiah would descend for their assistance, in great glory like that of kings.

Now those eyes that can see, those hearts that can do justice, and the sense that can ponder, should see and judge and think here as to whether these circumstances and those are identical or not. Leaving aside the prophecies for a moment, look at the situation rationally as a truth seeker, as to whether the case of the Muslims of this age and the Jews of the time of Jesus fulfils the words "one shoe matching the other shoe",[29] or not. Look at the Gospels with care and read whether what Jesus has described of the condition of the Jewish priests and lawyers, exposing their hypocrisy, is to be found in the present Muslim religious leaders or not. Is it not true that our leaders, like the Jewish priests, are day and night engaged in pointless disputes, are utterly devoid of spirituality, and are constantly attempting to prove others as *kāfir* while not knowing what Islam is themselves. They preach sermons which they do not act upon. They become preachers to earn a living, then go far and wide and make unlawful gain by pleasing the masses with baseless poetry. In their cunning, deceit and falsehood they are no less than the Jews. Similar is the condition of the men of worldly affairs. Most of them consider every kind of dishonesty and falsehood to be as lawful as mother's milk in the way of earning wealth. Those known as chieftains, who are ruling over derelict states, have been ruined by their voluptuous habits. Many of them drink alcohol like water, and have not the least aversion to adultery. Fear of God does not come near them in any part of the day or night.

Now pick up the histories of the Jews and see how intensely similar are these Muslims in their religious and worldly destruction to the Jews of the time of Jesus. The Torah contained the prophecy regarding the Jews that sovereignty would not depart from them until *Shiloh* came.[30] By Shiloh was meant Jesus, and so did it come to pass in actual fact, that sometime even before the birth of Jesus the various states of the Jews were ravaged by the Roman empire, and as the Jews, like the Muslims of today, had been weakened by internecine disputes, constant wrangling, negligence and ignorance, and their internal condition was itself like a bad omen for them, they gave themselves over to the Roman empire with their own hands sometime before the time of Jesus. Among the Muslim people too, by reason of similarity, it was necessary that a *Shiloh* should arise at precisely the time of religious and temporal destruction.

Advent of reformer at depth of Muslim decline

In point of fact, a similar prophecy has been made by the Holy Quran for this age of the Muslims which is akin to the days of Jesus in terms of timing and other features. It says:

من كل حدب ينسلون.

"From every vantage point they shall sally forth" (21:96) upon Islam, make mischief in its land, gain control over its countries, and reduce its noblest men to the lowest. This verse means that the Christian nations, which is the party called Gog and Magog, shall rush towards the Islamic countries from every position of superiority, and they shall be triumphant, crushing the Muslim countries till the dominion of Islam remains in name only, as is the case today. Look at the similarity of events, how the age of the misfortunes of Islam and the religious and temporal destruction of the Muslims is like the history of the Jews in the time of Jesus. Then look again, how the Quranic prophecy about the decline of the power of Islam and the dominance of its opponents conforms to the prophecy of the decline of the Israelite state given in the Torah.

The difference, however, in giving the glad tidings of the reformer, between the Old Testament prophecy and the Quranic prophecy, is only in the mode of expression: in the Torah the good news is given of the coming of Shiloh at the time of the breaking of the Israelite power and the departure of the sceptre, by which was meant the decline of rulership; in the Quran is given the good news, referring to the age of the weakening of Islamic power and the upsurge of tribulations, which means the *Dajjāl*-like activities of the Christian missionaries, of the *blowing of the trumpet.*[31] By the blowing of the trumpet is not meant the Day of Judgment, because more than a hundred years have passed over the appearance of the mischief brought about by the Christians, and yet no doomsday has wrecked havoc. What is meant is that by sending some Mahdi and *mujaddid* the trumpet of true guidance will be blown and the spirit of life will be breathed again into those who are dead through misguidance. For, the 'blowing of the trumpet' refers not only to physical giving of life and causing of death, but spiritual resuscitation and death are also always brought about through the 'blowing of the trumpet'. And just as in the Quran by the *blowing of the trumpet* is meant the sending of some *mujaddid* to break the dominance of the Christian faith, similarly by the *upsurge of tribulations* is meant that which in the Hadith is described under the name *Dajjāl.* God Almighty has not in the Quran used the words *Dajjāl* or Promised Messiah, as these are to be found in Hadith, but instead of *Dajjāl* He has referred to the mischief-making activities of the Christians. Hence the words "they sally forth from every point of vantage" (21:96) also refer to this. Likewise, in the Holy Quran the coming *mujaddid* is not called by the term 'Promised Messiah' anywhere, but the words 'blowing of the trumpet' are used to refer to him in order to make it known that the Promised Messiah shall not appear with earthly and physical weapons but that his acceptance and exaltation shall be based upon a sounding from heaven. He shall draw people to right and truth by the power of words of wisdom and by heavenly signs, for he shall arise at a time of crises caused by reason and philosophy, not a time of upheavals brought about by the sword.

The fact is that God Almighty sends a prophet or a *mujaddid* according to the nature of every prevailing trouble. Thus, just as in the time of Jesus the Jews had lost all their qualities, and had nothing left but cunning, deceit and mere verbosity, and had come under the sway of the Roman empire due to their own wickedness and disorganisation, the Romans not being blamable for conquering the country, precisely this is the condition of the Promised Messiah's time given in the Holy Quran. For instance, the Muslims of India are so incapable that, upon the advent of a reformer, they cannot oppose him by the sword because they do not possess any swords. And the British have taken the throne of Delhi just as the Roman empire took the throne of the Jews, i.e. due only to the bad ways and the incompetence of the kings. The British cannot be blamed for taking over the country so that one could raise the sword against them; in fact, the saying *"that which is upon us is from our own selves"* applies here. For this reason, the *mujaddid* of this century came in the likeness of Jesus, and was called the Promised Messiah because of intense similarity. This title is not a fabrication, but was required because it was so appropriate in the prevailing circumstances.

Promised Messiah in the Quran — a summary

It should be remembered that in one place in the Holy Quran the Promised Messiah is referred to by the word *rusul.*[32] But as to the question why he is not mentioned in the Quran in the same words as occur in Hadith, the answer is that it is to prevent the readers from getting the misimpression that by the Promised Messiah is meant, in actual fact, the Jesus to whom the Gospel was revealed, and that by *Dajjāl* is meant a specific man who is a trouble-maker. Hence Almighty God has, in the Holy Quran, banished all such doubts as follows.

Firstly, He gave the news of the death of Jesus, very plainly and categorically, as is evident from the verse: "when Thou didst cause me to die, Thou wast the watcher over them" (5:117).[33] Then He has made clear that our Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, is the last of the Prophets, as He says: "And he (Muhammad) is the Messenger of God and the last of the Prophets" (33:40). Then, by referring again and again to the many transgressions of the Jews, God repeatedly pointed to the fact that the same would be the eventual condition of the

Muslim masses and their religious leaders. It is then mentioned that in the latter days the Christians would be dominant, troubles of all kinds would spread by their hands, and waves of tribulation would arise from every side. They shall rush forth from every height, i.e. they would show their power and eminence and superiority in every sphere. In terms of worldly power and rule, they would be paramount: discovering and inventing all sorts of sciences and technologies, and bringing out valuable and wonderful industries. In planning and organisation too, they would be superior. For worldly ventures and attainment of such objectives they would show great determination. In the struggle and exertion for the propagation of religion they would excel and surpass all, as also in civic planning, business and agricultural development. To sum up, they would tower over and rise above every nation in all fields.

This is the significance of the words "they shall sally forth [*nasal*] from every vantage point [*hadab*]", for *hadab* means *high ground* and *nasal* means *to have precedence* or *to run forth.* In other words, in every field where there can be excellence and superiority, they would surpass every other nation. This is the major sign of that nation of the last days known as Gog and Magog, and it is also the sign of that mischievous class of Christian missionaries who are called the *Dajjāl.* And because *hadab* means *high ground,* it is denoted that they would have all worldly glories, but be devoid of any heavenly excellence. It is also proved from this verse that this is the nation which has been named Gog and Magog, and from among this very nation are the people who have exerted themselves to the utmost in spreading error, and have thus acquired the name: the great *Dajjāl.* While speaking of the rise of error, God said that at that time the trumpet would be sounded and all parties gathered together in one place (18:99). What is said of hell in the verses which follow, is, according to the Quranic idiom, a separate statement, for it is a common mode of speech in the Holy Quran that on some occasions, speaking of events of this world, the Last Day is mentioned on account of some connection. Those who study the Holy Quran closely are not unaware of this recurring idiom.

III. Proof of being Promised Messiah

The third part of our discussion is: What evidence is there that the Promised Messiah who is mentioned in the Quran and the Hadith in various ways is my humble self? I do not think that there is any need to give arguments at length in this regard. We have proved in this book that it is essential that there arise a man among the Muslim people, bearing the name of the Messiah. It is necessary for three reasons.

Successors to Holy Prophet Muhammad

Firstly, it is required by the perfect and complete likeness between our Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, and Moses, which is understood from the words: "as We sent a messenger to Pharoah". The reason is that the verse "Surely We have sent to you a Messenger, a witness against you, *as We sent a messenger to Pharoah*" (73:15) clearly states that just as Moses was a witness to the good and evil of his people, so is our Prophet a witness. For Moses, this witnessing in the permanent sense was only possible by means of a successorship [*k̲h̲ilāfat*]. That is, for the completion of the argument, God Almighty instituted for Moses for fourteen hundred years a series of successors who, in reality, appeared for the service of the Torah and the support of the law of Moses, so that through these successors God may complete the testimony of Moses, and thus he may be able to testify before God on the Day of. Judgment with regard to all the Israelites. Similarly, God Almighty has made our Holy Prophet a witness upon all the people of the Islamic nation; and said: "Surely We have sent to you a Messenger, a witness against you", and "when We bring thee (O Muhammad) as a witness against these people" (4:41). It is obvious, however, that in the physical sense the Holy Prophet remained among his followers for only 23 years. Therefore the question, How can he be a witness upon his people forever, has the only real answer that it is by means of successorship. That is, as with Moses, God has also appointed successors to the Holy Prophet, these being till the Day of Judgment, and the testimony of the *k͟halīfas* is considered to be precisely the testimony of the Holy Prophet. In this way, the verse "Surely We have sent to you a Messenger, a witness against you" is proved right from every angle. To sum up, the belief relating to the eternal witnessing, which is established repeatedly from conclusive verses of the Quran and is accepted by all Muslims, can only be proved logically and factually if the eternal *k͟hilāfat* is accepted. And this point proves our claim, so ponder!

Similarity of last phases of Muslim and Israelite history

Secondly, the perfect and complete likeness between the *k͟hilāfat* to the Holy Prophet Muhammad and the successorship to Moses renders imperative the coming of the Promised Messiah, as is understood from the following verse: "God has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will surely make them successors [*k͟halīfas*] in the earth as He made those before them to be successors" (24:55). This clearly conveys that a *mujaddid* must come bearing the name of the Messiah in the fourteenth century (*Hijra*), because the Muhammadi *k͟hilāfat* can only attain the most complete and total likeness to the Mosaic successorship if the first and the last respective phases have a high degree of mutual conformity. The similarity regarding the last phase is in two points: firstly, the disintegration of the nation, the decline in worldly standing, and the change for the worse in virtue, faith and righteousness; and secondly, the coming of a *mujaddid* at such a time, who has the name Promised Messiah and who restores the original state of faith. Our Muslim brethren not only acknowledge the first sign, but are witnessing with their own eyes the destruction of the Muslims and the rise of an alien nation which considers their religion to be inferior and degraded in the same manner as the Romans, having overwhelmed the Israelites, thought of the Jews in the time of Jesus. They are also witnessing that the inner condition of the religious and secular leaders of Islam is no less bad than that of the Jews; indeed, it seems to be twice as bad. When we read in the very first part of the Quran passages regarding the Jewish priests, to the effect that "you preach goodness to others, but forget your own souls", "you do not stop short of giving trouble to your own brethren", and "you are involved in all sorts of selfishness, vice, wickedness, evil scheming, and deceit for worldly gain", the heart spontaneously cries out that all these verses apply to most of our own religious leaders.

Since our brethren themselves accept that one of these two necessary signs is to be found in this age, to turn away from acknowledging the second sign is exactly like saying that the sun has undoubtedly risen but it is not daytime yet. In any case, a just and wise person will have no recourse but to accept that, looking at the Quranic verses with thought, the very point is proved that the series of successorship to the Holy Prophet Muhammad should correspond completely to the chain of Mosaic successorship, as is understood from the word *kamā*.[34] And as it conforms completely, then among the Muslim people too, in their last days which are close to the Day of Judgment, there must come a *k͟halīfa* like Jesus, who should deliver conclusive proofs of the truth, not by means of the sword, but through spiritual teaching and blessings. Moreover, given that Jesus came fourteen hundred years after Moses, it has also to be conceded that the Promised Messiah must make his appearance in this age, as the promises of God do not fail.

Claimant has appeared at proper time

So one should consider as to how many men there are who have claimed to be the Promised Messiah in this age. If it is supposed that, for example, ten men from among the Muslims have made the claim in this age, then one of those ten must be the truthful one, the Promised Messiah, because the appointed signs of God demand the existence of the truthful one. However, considering that out of the two hundred million Muslims living in Syria, Arabia, Iraq, Egypt, India and other such countries, in this age of signs which is the time of the advent of the Promised Messiah according to the Book of God and the Hadith, only one man of the Muslims has claimed to be the Promised Messiah, then to reject this claimant who has appeared at the proper time implies the denial of the prophecy. The coming of the Promised Messiah at the start of the fourteenth century (*Hijra*) is proved so strongly from Hadith reports, from the Quran, and from visions of the saints, that no explanation of it is necessary. Furthermore, to reject a claim that has been made at its proper place and occasion, makes a righteous person shudder.

Briefly, the first proof of the truth of this humble one is the making of the claim at the time which had been specified by the Leader of the Apostles, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, and the Holy Quran, and the visions of the saints, for the advent of the Promised Messiah. As our Holy Prophet was the Prophet of the latter days, and a further thirteen hundred years have passed of these latter days, consider the hadith in which the seven steps of the pulpit shown in a vision are taken to be the seven millenniums of the life of the world. Ponder deeply as to whether this age, according to this hadith, is the one necessary for the Promised Messiah or not. Think also about the hadith, "The signs shall come after two hundred years", from which the *ulama* have concluded that the major signs of the end shall commence from the thirteenth century *Hijra*.[35] For, if by signs are meant minor signs, in that case the condition "after two hundred years" would serve no purpose because the coming of the Holy Prophet himself is one of the signs of the Day of Judgment. And if this hadith is taken as meaning that major signs would start to appear after two hundred years, this is against facts because no sign began to appear after two hundred years. Therefore, the *ulama* have taken the "two hundred" in this hadith to be that two hundred which comes after a millennium, i.e. twelve hundred years. And in this interpretation the *ulama* are correct because there is no doubt that great evils did arise in the thirteenth century, the storm of the *Dajjāl* spread in just this century, and the spectacle of the words "they sally forth from every point of vantage" (the Quran, 21:96) was also seen in this century. Hundreds of Islamic states perished, and the Christians attained towering supremacy.

Heavenly signs in support of Promised Messiah

As regards this third point under discussion, i.e. if there is in fact a Promised Messiah to arise among the Muslims, what is the proof that it is my humble self, we have just given some general arguments which need not be repeated. If, however, specific evidence is demanded, the questioner should be a little patient so that God Himself may send proofs in support of His servant. The fact is that such claims cannot be proved comprehensively merely by means of reasoned arguments or documentary evidence, till the blessings of the claimant are established by heavenly assistance. This is the ancient law of God which has constantly applied to the prophets, peace be upon them. For instance, although there were prophecies given in the earlier scriptures regarding our Leader and Master, the Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, and then he came in an age which demanded the raising of a glorious Apostle, yet despite all this, Almighty God did not stop at the earlier prophecies to prove the veracity of His true Prophet, nor did He deem the other arguments to be sufficient; rather, He sent numerous heavenly signs in verification of this Holy Prophet, so much so that the Prophet's truth was openly displayed, and the light of his truthfulness shone like the sun.

Hence it should be similarly realised that if this humble one is from God Almighty, and is true in what he says, then God shall manifest his truth through special assistance, and He shall make it clear to the world by His special signs that this humble one is from Him, and it is not his own planning. If a person is proved true in his claim by means of heavenly signs, then after that there cannot remain any reason for denial. For, the heavenly sign is the entity by which great prophethoods have been proved, apostleships have been proved, and books have been proved to be the word of God, so why should not the claim of being the like of the Messiah be established by this means? In brief, the manner in which God Almighty has been establishing the truth of His true servants — in precisely the same manner shall He also prove the truth of this humble one. It should be noted that the Jews faced many problems in accepting the prophethood of Jesus. It was written in the earlier books that the Messiah would appear as a king, but Jesus came as a poor, destitute man. The earlier books had recorded that the days of the glory of the Jews would return with his advent, and they believed that he would fight the Romans and re-establish the kingdom of Israel. However, the situation turned out to be the reverse, and the Jews faced even more calamities and humiliation. Similarly, it was written in the earlier books that he would not come until the prophet Elijah returned to the world. So the Jews were waiting for Elijah to descend from heaven. But Elijah did not come down, and Jesus claimed that he was the Promised Messiah, adding that John the Baptist was the one who was Elijah.[36] The Jews, however, did not like this interpretation; rather, they were waiting for the descent of Elijah in the same manner as that in which Muslims today are awaiting the descent of Jesus. But despite all these obstacles, which were really very difficult, God did not let his true prophet perish, and proved by many signs that he was the true one. From this it is necessarily concluded that it was the Promised Messiah who was accepted in the end as true.

Dear ones, realise with certainty that in the ancient law of God there is only one way of showing the veracity of the truthful one, and that is that God should establish by heavenly signs that He is with him and has chosen him. Now consider that the claim of my humble self to be the Promised Messiah is no greater than the claims of Moses or Jesus. Then think about how all these revered prophets were acknowledged in the world — was it through heavenly blessings and assistance, or by some other means? So realise that there is no amendment or alteration in God Almighty's law of old. If this humble one is not from God, and it is mere falsehood and fabrication, then the end shall not be good, and God will destroy him with humiliation, and make him the object of curse and taunt till the end of time. For, there is no sin greater than that a man should say that he has been sent by God while he has not really been sent by Him, and say "I am favoured with communication from God, and His word descends upon my heart and runs off my tongue" whereas God's communication had never taken place with him, nor had God's word ever entered his heart or issued forth from his tongue. *Now the curse of God be upon the liars who make fabrications against God — they shall be forsaken in the world and in the Hereafter.*

If, however, this humble person *is* from God, and He *has* sent me, and what I receive as revelation *is* word from Him, then I shall most certainly not perish nor be destroyed. On the contrary, God will destroy him who rises to oppose me and to obstruct my way. I am surprised why people consider the term *Promised Messiah* to be strange, and demand proof about it from me, while it is not prohibited, logically speaking, that someone should arise in the manner of Jesus among the Muslims, who are the likes of the followers of Moses. Philosophers accept that the process of replication takes place within the human race, and the law of God and nature has been seen to be that in this world some people are made in the likeness of others. The likes of the good are born, and so also the likes of the wicked. The proof which should be demanded is that of being appointed by God. This proof contains within itself evidence of all other points. Look, when our Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, declared to people that he was the like of Moses and the Apostle of God, those to whom his apostleship was proved had no doubt regarding his being the like of Moses either, and just as they reposed belief in the apostleship of the Holy Prophet, so did they believe in him as being the like of Moses. Hence the proof of being from God and being a true recipient of revelation is the basis of all proofs. For instance, no one demands evidence of the truth of every single line of the book revealed to a prophet. It is by the apostleship being proved true that all those things are established by themselves. Dear ones, it is not that God wants to make a novel law in my case. Look at the ancient law of God, and put your questions according to that.

Signs displayed by the Promised Messiah

Besides this, up to this day which is 11 *Rabī'-ul-Awwal* 1311 A.H., corresponding to 22 September 1893 C.E. and 8 *Asvaj* 1950, Friday, somewhat more than three thousand signs have been displayed by this humble one which have hundreds of witnesses; indeed, the fulfilment of some prophecies has been witnessed by thousands of Hindus, Christians and other members of opposing faiths. If you investigate the matter, there are some signs which hundreds of thousands of enemies of the religion of Islam have observed with their own eyes. Those people are still alive who have frequently seen signs which are beyond human power, and there are also hundreds alive who were told of the acceptance of prayers beforehand, and then they saw the affair come to pass as it had been predicted.

There are nearly sixteen thousand people in India, England, Germany, France, Russia and Italy, from among Hindu pundits, Jewish rabbis, Magian leaders, and Christian clergymen, priests and bishops, who were sent registered letters to the effect that, in reality, Islam is the only true religion in the world, while all other faiths have strayed far from fact and truth. Should any opponent have any doubt, he may come face to face with me and stay for a year to witness signs of the truth of Islam displayed by me. If I turn out to be in error, he may take compensation from me at the rate of Rs. 200 per month for his year; else, I do not demand anything from him, except that he should accept the faith of Islam. If he wishes, he may have this money deposited in a bank for his satisfaction. No one, however, came forward.

Now every wise person can realise that if this humble one did not have the kind of perfect faith in help from God which is attained after repeated observations and personal experience, how would it have been possible to stand alone to confront all the opponents of Islam, i.e. those people who are known opponents of the faith and leaders of their respective communities. It is obvious that the frail mortal certainly does not possess such strength in his soul as to confront the whole world. What, then, could it be except perfect faith and personal experiences which gave this humble one the courage to take this line of action? And it was not only with the tongue, but also approximately Rs. 2000 were spent on publishing these leaflets, which were printed in English and Urdu, and on despatching them by registered post to places in India and countries in Europe. But no one had the courage to face the challenge, and the fear which struck the hearts of the opponents was also a sign.

By way of a test, ask some Christian preacher of these times whether he did not receive a registered letter inviting to Islam. Then consider if the man who spends many thousands of Rupees merely for the publication and despatch of leaflets, and offers a substantial monetary reward to the opponent in the event of the latter's victory, can be logically thought to be just relying on falsehood, lies and fabrication? Has such an imposter ever been read about in books, or heard of, or seen in the world? At least give an example. Dear ones, rest assured that unless a person has the backing of God, such firmness, courage and liberality with funds can never be displayed. Has anyone ever seen or heard of a *maulavi* of the present time sending a letter even to an English assistant commissioner inviting him to Islam? Yet here it is not only this, but leaflets and letters of invitation to Islam have been sent to the Parliament in London, the Crown Prince, the Queen (Victoria), and Chancellor Bismarck, and the receipts of despatch still exist.

Claim of being 'like of Messiah' not a fabrication

In these leaflets, published almost ten years ago, it was also stated that this humble person resembles Jesus, son of Mary, in terms of the Messiah's qualities. For the thinking man, this is another evidence of the truth of this humble one, because if the claim of being the like of the Messiah was just a human plan, and not revelation from God, it would not have been possible that ten, nay twelve, years before claiming to be the Promised Messiah, I could have published repeated revelations supporting this claim. For every person can realise that, by nature, man does not have such power of pre-planning that he can lay the foundations, in advance, for the claim to be made twelve years later. And then wonder upon wonder, that God should grant this unjust imposter such a long respite which is now more than twelve years. And the imposter should be so bold in his fabrication as to have planned beforehand to make this claim twelve years later, and to have laid its foundation a dozen years earlier by saying that he was definitely the like of the Messiah. Not only this, but he should have referred to Divine revelation to proclaim himself the like of the Messiah, and declared himself to resemble him in terms of attainments, and considered his own self to be a chip off the old block.

And not content with this, he should also have published openly and publicly in his book *Barāhin Aḥmadiyya,* twelve years before claiming to be the Messiah, that God had named him Jesus, and promised to make him die a natural death, to raise him unto Himself, to absolve him of all the charges of the deniers, and to make his followers dominate his enemies till the Day of Judgment. And God should not only grant respite to such an individual, but succour him with Divine signs and make a community of followers for him, while He Himself says in the Holy Quran that He does not help the imposter, but that he is soon destroyed and his followers are dispersed.

Indeed, God told the Chief of the Apostles (Holy Prophet Muhammad) that if he had fabricated anything in the least, his jugular vein would have been cut off. Hence, if it is not true that God Almighty soon destroys the imposter who intends to mislead people by falsely pretending to be an apostle, then in that case the argument regarding the Holy Prophet, i.e. that supposing, God forbid, he had been an imposter, God would have destroyed him, cannot be correct. Then, despite this long respite and the hundreds of instances of God's help and the hundreds of Divine signs, the opponents said thousands of prayers to bring down chastisement upon my humble self, and in their *mubāhila* prayers,[37] they cried bitterly for the coming down of punishment upon me, but they gained nothing but disgrace and dishonour for themselves. And God Almighty knows that, in none of my *mubāhila* prayers did I wish for punishment to befall any of the opponents. Nor in the case of Abdul Haqq of Ghazni, who entered into a *mubāhila* in Amritsar, did I pray for his death, although he wept and wailed much (in his prayer, for my destruction). My purpose in the *mubāhila* was, and still is, that the heavenly signs in support of my humble self should be widely seen, and it would be sufficient dishonour and disgrace for the opponent in the *mubāhila* for God to grant me victory at every place.

To sum up, all these are signs of truthfulness, but for him who ponders. I regret that I am asked again and again as to what proof there is of my claim of being the Promised Messiah. Such people do not understand what proof there was of Jesus being the promised one, or of our Holy Prophet being the promised Last of the Prophets. Was it not that God Almighty had proved them to be true by numerous signs? And although the Jews did not accept Jesus, holding till this day that he was not the Promised Messiah, yet his miracles and signs proved him to be from God.* The necessary demand is always for proof of being

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* A gentleman, Hidayat-ullah by name, who has written a book accusing me of denying the miracles of Jesus, claims to infer from some statements in my book *Izāla Auhām* that, God forbid, I entirely deny the miracles of Jesus. But let it be made clear that this is an error of such people's own reading and understanding. I do not deny that Jesus performed miracles. Doubtless he displayed some miracles, and although reading the Gospels mars his miracles to a great extent — as by the story of the healing pool (John 5:24) and his own frequent denials of performing miracles — we have nothing to do with the Gospels. The Holy Quran shows that he was given certain signs. However, it is an error on the part of our superficial religious leaders to think that he, like the Creator of the worlds, would make a form of some bird and then blow into it, and it would fly off living, or that he would touch a dead body and it would spring to life and start walking around, or that he had knowledge of hidden things, or that he has not even died till now, but is in heaven in bodily form.

If all these things that are ascribed to him are true, what doubt does there remain about his being the creator of the world, knower of the unseen, and the giver of life to the dead? So if, given this situation, a Christian should use this argument to prove his divinity, on the basis that the presence of the characteristics of a thing implies the existence of that thing, what reply do our Muslim brothers have for it? If they say that these miracles took place as a result of prayer, this is an addition to the word of God because it is understood from the Holy Quran that the thing which was shaped in the form of a bird, for example, used to fly when it was blown into (by Jesus). Prayer is not mentioned anywhere in the Holy Quran, nor is it stated that the form of the bird actually received life. One should not add anything of one's own to the word of God. This is exactly the corruption for which the Jews were cursed. In fact, the *Mu'ālim al-Tanzīl* and many other commentaries of the Quran show that the form of the bird would, after a short flight, fall to the ground like dust again. What else can then be concluded except that it was really only dust? Just as toys of clay are made to move about by man's machinery, these used to fly by the penetrating influence of a prophet's spirit. If not, then believing in their actual creation necessarily leads to much trouble and the ascribing of partners to God.

The question is whether there was a miracle, and the flight of a lifeless thing, while without life, is a great miracle. However, if in any reading of the Holy Quran the words "it was raised to life" are found at this point, or if it can be true and being from God; the proof of *likeness* is included within that.

Signs of the age fulfilled

Besides this, all the characteristics of the present age are loudly proclaiming that the *mujaddid* of this century should be the Promised Messiah because all the signs of his age, as fixed by the holy word of God, have been fulfilled in this time. Do you not see that Christian rule is swallowing up all the sovereign states of the world, and they have supremacy of every kind, and fulfil the words "they shall sally forth from every point of vantage" (21:96)? And the spiritual and temporal condition of Islam has been ruined, as was the condition of the Jews in the time of Jesus. Jesus came at a time when it was totally inexpedient to take up the sword for the cause of the faith, the reason being that the Jews had lost their rule due to their own evil ways, and it was not the fault of the Roman empire that it took over the country; otherwise the sword could be raised against it. The same condition exists today, i.e. the Muslim rulers have lost their country due to their own extravagance and indulgence in unworthy luxuries. They had no competence left to run the country, so God handed it to the British who, having taken it over, did not do any injustice: they did not stop anyone from the performance of prayer or fasting, nor prevent anyone from going to the pilgrimage in Makka; rather, they established public peace and liberty. As they were benefactors, how could God the Merciful order the raising of the sword against them? Does He only have the physical sword for the propagation of the faith, and not the spiritual sword? Moreover, at this time faith cannot rely upon

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shown historically that they really used to come to life, and lay eggs, and that even today there are many birds who are their progeny, then one must provide proof of all this. God says in the Quran that if the whole world wanted to create a fly, it would not be able to make it because this implies confusion in the creation of God. To assert that God had permitted Jesus to become a creator, is a fabrication against God. There is no contradiction in the Divine word. God does not give such permission to anyone. He did not give the Chief of the Apostles, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, the permission to create even a fly, so how could the son of Mary have been given this permission? Fear God, and do not take the metaphorical for the real.

the sword. The British have not converted anyone to their religion by means of the sword, in which case the sword would have been the reply; instead, people have been destroyed by means of modern philosophy and science, and the doubts raised (against Islam) by Christian preachers. The response to this should be to prove the truth of Islam, not to use the sword against people.

Hence it is that God Almighty, in accordance with the condition of the Muslims, sent for them a reformer like Jesus, without sword or spear, and He gave this reformer only heavenly weapons with which to defeat falsehood. And just as the numerical value of the words *‘Īsā ‘inda minārat Dami͟shq* is 1400, so did that Promised Messiah appear at the start of the fourteenth century (*hijra*); and as the number 1275 comes from the words *ā͟kharīna min-hum lammā yalḥaqū bi-him,* it was in that period that he was being prepared for the task of reform of mankind.[38] Just as the Holy Quran had prophesied that, at the time of the upsurge of tribulations caused by the Christians, the trumpet shall be blown, so did he make his appearance. Many men of God had given news of his coming beforehand through Divine revelation. Indeed, some told of his name thirty-two years before he appeared, saying that he was the Promised Messiah and that the original Jesus was dead. Many seers of visions had fixed the fourteenth century as the time of the coming of the Promised Messiah, and had left their revelations in writing. Now after all this, what more proof can there be in matters of this kind, where one must leave some room for faith in the unseen?

Specific signs to be shown by Promised Messiah

Besides this, there are some other great signs on behalf of this humble one which are yet to be tested. For instance, there is the prophecy relating to Abdullah Atham of Amritsar, the term of which is fifteen months starting from 5 June 1893, the prophecy regarding the death of Pandit Lekhram of Peshawar, the term being six years from 1893, and the prophecy about the death of the son-in-law of Mirza Ahmad Baig of Hoshiarpur, a resident of Pati in the district of Lahore, the term of which has approximately eleven months to run from today, 21 September 1893. All these affairs, which are utterly beyond human powers, are sufficient to identify a truthful one or a liar. For, life and death are both in the hands of God, and unless a person has a very high rank in His eyes, God does not destroy any of his enemies for him through his prayer, especially in the case when that person declares himself to be from God, and adduces such a miracle as proof of his truth.

Prophecies are, therefore, no ordinary matter, not something which is in man's control, but only in the hands of the God of glorified dignity. If someone is a seeker after truth, he should wait for the term of these prophecies. The three prophecies cover the three great nations of Punjab and India, i.e. one is related to the Muslims, one to the Hindus, and one to the Christians. And of these, the prophecy relating to the Muslim people is very grand because it has the following components: (1) Mirza Ahmad Baig of Hoshiarpur should die within the limit of three years; (2) then his son-in-law, the husband of his elder daughter, should die within two and a half years; (3) Mirza Ahmad Baig should not die before the day of his daughter's wedding; (4) the daughter too must not die before she is married, and then widowed, and then married a second time; (5) my humble self too should not die till all these events take place; (6) and then she should be married to myself. Obviously these events are not in human control.[39]

Conclusion

If all this proof is still not sufficient for Mr Ata Muhammad, then an easy method is that, after carefully reading this book, he should inform me by a published notice that he has not been satisfied by these arguments, and he still believes me to have made a fabrication, and wishes to see some sign with regard to himself. I shall, God willing, turn to God with regard to him, and I am sure that God shall not let me be defeated by an opponent because I am from Him, and I have come for the revival of the religion by His command. However, in this notice he should grant me general permission to publish any revelation, of whatever kind, that I may receive about him.

Considering that Muslims ought to have been happy at the time of the appearance of a *mujaddid,* I wonder why there is this vexation and indignation, and why they are offended that God has appointed a man to conclusively establish the truth of His religion. I have realised, however, that the state of the faith of most Muslims today is very defective, the poison of modern philosophy having destroyed their belief. Islam is undoubtedly on their tongues, but the hearts have gone very far from it. God's works and Divine powers are looked upon by them with ridicule. Such is Mr Ata Muhammad. I remember that when, in Amritsar, Mr Abdullah Atham was told of the prophecy of his death, Mr Ata Muhammad came to my place of stay and related before me, as an example, that a doctor had told him of his death, saying that Ata Muhammad would die within a certain period. However, that time passed safely, and he went to see the doctor. When he accosted him, the doctor asked: Who are you? He said: I am the same Ata Muhammad whose death you had foretold. The meaning is that all these matters are false and meaningless. Mr Ata Muhammad should remember, however, that to cite the example of the doctor only shows that he is himself totally ignorant of heavenly light. There undoubtedly exists a Being called God, and in support of His true religion He displays heavenly signs, not just in one particular age, but at every time of need, reviving the faith of the world anew. The story of the doctor shows the extent of his faith in God.

I consider it appropriate now to end this book at this point. *Praise be to God! the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden! Our Patron, a most excellent Patron, and a most excellent Helper!*

Humbly, the author, Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian,

Friday, 22 September 1893 at Qadian.

Notes

by the Translator

Introductory Note

To understand the subject matter of this book, the following preliminary knowledge is necessary. At the time when Hazrat Mirza arose, most Muslims held the belief that according to the Quran Jesus did not die but was raised up to heaven where he was still alive; and on the basis of certain prophecies contained in Hadith, they also held the belief that Jesus would descend among the Muslims at the time of their worst downfall and lead them to victory over their formidable foes. As regards the first belief, Hazrat Mirza proved that, in fact, according to the Quran Jesus had died in his own time, as is the law of God and of nature for all human beings. This implies that the belief in his return could not be correct. However, Hazrat Mirza showed that the Hadith prophecies in question could be interpreted, in the light of well-known religious principles and historical precedents, as referring to the coming of a Muslim saint in the likeness of Jesus. Hazrat Mirza applied these prophecies to himself and thus claimed to be the Messiah who had been promised to appear among the Muslims — the Promised Messiah.

At that time, a tiny number of Muslims already believed, on rational rather than purely Quranic grounds, that Jesus was dead and not alive in heaven. When Hazrat Mirza raised this issue forcefully, there was much uproar and fury at first, but gradually an increasing number of Muslims, apart from those who became his followers, came to accept his incontrovertible case based on the Quran; and now hardly an educated Muslim can be found who holds that Jesus has not died. This ever-growing group has, however, to decide what to make of the Hadith prophecies speaking of the return of Jesus. The tendency, particularly among modernists, is to deny the authenticity of the Hadith reports containing the prophecies. Where, they ask, does the Quran speak of the future coming of a Messiah?

It was in response to a question from a critic holding such views that Hazrat Mirza wrote this book. As the critic also belonged to a school which altogether rejects the system of Hadith as valid religious authority in Islam, Hazrat Mirza first discusses the general issue of the authenticity of Hadith. Then the bulk of the book, as indicated by the title, cites evidence from the Quran itself about the coming of a Messiah among the Muslims, and shows that the Hadith prophecies are based on certain fundamental teachings of the Quran.

Note 1 (page 2)

Aḥād is a technical term in the study of Hadith, and refers to those reports which are narrated on the authority of only one Companion of the Holy Prophet.

Note 2 (page 12)

The reference is to the overthrow of the Sasanid (Persian) and the Byzantine (Roman) empires by Muslim conquest; *Chosroes* and *Caesar* being, respectively, titles of the heads of these empires. The hadith report referred to may be found in *Mis̲h̲kāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, Book of *Fitan*, chapter II, section I.

Note 3 (page 13)

The 13th century *Hijra* began about the year 1786 C.E.

Note 4 (page 15)

Ṣiḥāḥ Sitta means the *six reliable books*, and is the term applied to the six collections of Hadith recognised as authentic by the Sunni Muslims. These are as follows: *Buk̲h̲ārī, Muslim, Tirmid̲h̲ī, Nasā'ī, Abū Dāwūd,* and *Ibn Māja*.

Note 5 (page 16)

Gog and Magog are two ancient tribes or nations mentioned both in the Bible and in the Holy Quran, and both books contain prophecies about their resurgence in the latter days. As this resurgence is linked to the coming of the Messiah, Hazrat Mirza explained that Gog and Magog in the prophecies represent the two dominant European races of modern times, i.e. the Eastern European Slavonic peoples and the Western European Teutonic peoples, because these ancient tribes were the racial forbears of these modern nations. The same prophecies speak of a *Dajjāl*, for which see Note 8. Hazrat Mirza explained that, in the prophecies, the Western nations are called *Gog and Magog* in reference to their racial origin, and called *Dajjāl* in reference to certain values of their civilisation.

Note 6 (page 19)

The term *mujaddid*, meaning *renewer* or *reviver*, and usually rendered as *reformer*, is based on a hadith which prophesies that, in every century, there is to arise among the Muslims someone who will renew and revive their faith, restoring it to its original purity. Muslims generally accept various illustrious servants of Islam as the *mujaddids* of the centuries during which they lived; for example, Umar ibn Abdul Aziz, Imam Shafi'i and al-Ghazali, of earlier times, and more recently, Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind (d. 1624) and Shah Wali-ullah of Delhi (d. 1763), both of India. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad claimed to be the *mujaddid* of the fourteenth century of Islam, which began in 1883 C.E.

At this point, Hazrat Mirza has made a distinction between a *mujaddid* and a messenger of God (*rasūl*); the latter being an actual prophet and messenger of God in Islamic terminology, while the former is classed as a non-prophet in the same terminology. However, the word *rasūl*, when taken in its literal Arabic meaning of *messenger*, can also be applied to a *mujaddid*.

Note 7 (page 19)

Lailat al-Qadr, literally meaning *The Night of Majesty*, refers to a spiritually auspicious night, in the month of Ramadaan, which marks the start of the revelation of the Quran to the Holy Prophet Muhammad. It is generally considered to be one of the odd nights in the last third of that month.

Note 8 (page 21)

The Sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad regarding the calamities to befall the Muslims in the latter days make mention of *Dajjāl*, depicted as a man epitomising the forces of evil, who shall possess miraculous powers of control over nature, by means of which he will have mastery of the earth and its inhabitants. He is also identified with the Anti-christ. *Dajjāl* is prophesied as subjugating the Muslims politically, and weakening their faith by spreading doubt. Regarding that time of the utter helplessness of the Muslims, it is prophesied that the Messiah will then arise to champion the cause of Islam and defeat *Dajjāl*.

In about 1890, under Divine inspiration, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad disclosed to the Muslim world that *Dajjāl* was not some monstrous superhuman individual, but was none other than the materialistic forces of modern Western civilisation. They fulfilled all the signs given in the prophecies. For details, see other works of Hazrat Mirza such as *Izāla Auhām*. This explanation of the nature of *Dajjāl* has since come to be accepted by other notable Muslims, including some opponents of the Ahmadiyya Movement such as Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (see his English book *Faith versus Materialism*).

Note 9 (page 24)

Since the days when these words were written, the prophecies of the Quran and Hadith discussed here have found more and more spectacular fulfilment.

Note 10 (page 25)

See Matthew ch. 24 verse 29.

Note 11 (page 26)

Rusul is the plural of *rasūl*, the meaning of the latter being *messenger*. In one place, it is said in the Quran: "O ye messengers (*rusul*), eat of the good things and do good deeds" (23:51). Here the plural form is said by some, as indicated by the context, to refer to the *one* prophet Jesus. And in the renowned, classical dictionary of the Quran, the *Mufrādāt* of Raghib, it is recorded that "messengers" here means the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his chief Companions. Thus, as Hazrat Mirza says here, the plural word *rusul* has been used in the Quran to indicate the singular as well as to refer to those who are not prophets. So the application of this word to the Promised Messiah is *not* in terms of its meaning as *prophet*, but in terms of its recognised, broad usage as referring to a *non-prophet*.

Note 12 (page 26)

This is the generally understood meaning of this verse.

Note 13 (page 27)

Dābbat al-arḍ or 'the creature from (or of) the earth' is another of the signs of the last days and is mentioned in the Quran as follows: "And when the word comes to pass against them, We shall bring forth for them a creature from the earth that will speak to them, because people did not believe in Our messages" (27:82). Further details of this creature given in Hadith reports are mostly conflicting and unreliable. However, the name itself conveys the idea of 'clinging to low, earthly desires', and the description that it will *speak* to people indicates that this creature typifies a group of human beings.

Note 14 (page 29)

The reference is to the early Israelite wars, particularly those under Moses and Joshua. The Book of Joshua gives 9 instances in which the Israelites, after taking a town, destroyed "all" the inhabitants, "all that breathed" (see Joshua 10:28–40 and 11:10–15). These actions are said there to be "as the Lord God of Israel commanded". In some other instances, the killing of infants is specifically mentioned. When the Israelites killed only the adult males of the Midianites whom they had defeated, Moses instructed them: "Now, therefore, kill every male among the little ones" (see Book of Numbers 31:1–18). In Joshua 6:21 and 1 Samuel 15:1–8 it is mentioned, respectively, that the Israelites killed "young and old" and "infant and suckling" as part of their complete destruction of the enemy communities.

Note 15 (page 30)

The word *muḥaddaṯh* is used in a Saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad in *Buk̲h̲ārī* to denote a person who receives revelation from God without being what is known as a *prophet* in Islamic terminology. It is clear from the Quran and Hadith that revelation of a lower kind will continue to be received by the Muslim righteous, even though prophethood itself and the highest type of revelation have terminated after the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

Note 16 (page 30)

The Quran relates a story of three messengers (sing. *mursal*) in chapter 33, verses 13–21. It was held by renowned commentators before Hazrat Mirza's time that these "messengers" were not actual prophets, but inspired saints who fall in the category of *muḥaddaṯh* (see last note).

Note 17 (page 30)

Here Hazrat Mirza states in the clearest words possible that no prophet can come after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and that this is the meaning of the Holy Prophet being the *k̲h̲ātam an-nabiyyin*. Moreover, *instead* of prophets, there come saints (sing. *muḥaddaṯh*) among the Muslims. It is also made clear that the term 'messenger' can include a saint, as well as real prophets and messengers of God.

Note 18 (page 31)

In this section of the book, the terms *k̲h̲alīfa* and *k̲h̲ilāfat* are referred to very frequently. In a general sense, the word *k̲h̲alīfa* is applied to a successor (of someone), *k̲h̲ilāfat* being the institution of successorship.

As used in this book, these terms denote the successors to the Holy Prophet Muhammad within the Islamic system or the successors to Moses within the Israelite order, depending on the context. In this translation, the original terms *k͟halīfa* and *k͟hilāfat* have been retained whenever the reference is to the Islamic dispensation, and the English words *successor* and *successorship* used whenever the reference is to Israelite history.

Note 19 (page 31)

The reference here is to the duration of the 'Righteous Caliphate' (*k͟hilāfat rās͟hida*) under the first four Caliphs after the Holy Prophet Muhammad which lasted for thirty years. Hazrat Mirza argues against the view advanced by some Muslims that that was to be the entire extent of *k͟hilāfat* (successorship) to the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

Note 20 (page 36)

According to the full text of verses 5:116–117, God will ask Jesus on the Day of Judgment the question: 'Did you say to people, "Take me and my mother for two gods besides God".' The reply Jesus will give is also recorded there, its last part being as follows: "I only said to them what Thou didst command me: Serve God, my Lord and your Lord; and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when Thou didst cause me to die, Thou wast the watcher over them". This reply clearly shows that Jesus died at a time when his followers still adhered to his teaching of belief in One God, and that on the Day of Judgment he will know nothing of their later belief in his own divinity, i.e. he will not have returned to this world to witness their later condition.

Note 21 (page 45)

Contained in the verse discussed earlier, promising the appearance of *k͟halīfas* among the Muslims, and ending by warning those who reject them.

Note 22 (page 45)

The author has previously referred to this verse (56:39–40), on pages 30–31, and explained it as meaning that, just as there was a multitude of successors to Moses, likewise would there be many *k͟halīfas* to the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

Note 23 (page 45)

The report about the coming of a man called *Ḥārit͟h* is to be found in the Hadith collection *Abū Dāwūd*. The word *ḥārit͟h* means a cultivator and farmer. Hazrat Mirza being from a family of agricultural landlords, applies this prophecy to himself. Prophecies about the coming of the Mahdi are to be found in many Hadith books, the basic fact being very well-known to all Muslims. The prophecies about *Ḥārith* and other *khalīfas* are also given in *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ,* Book of *Fitan,* chapter III, sections I and II.

Note 24 (page 49)

The reference is probably to the following verses: "Surely We revealed the Torah, having guidance and light" (5:44), and: "We ordained for him (Moses) in the tablets admonition of every kind and clear explanation of all things" (7:145).

Note 25 (page 49)

See 1 Kings 22:6.

Note 26 (page 50)

The word *ẓill* means a *reflection, shadow* or *image.* In the spiritual sciences of Islam (*taṣawwuf*), a saint is often spoken of as "possessing the qualities of prophethood by way of *ẓill*" or as being "the *ẓill* of a prophet", meaning that he reflects or mirrors the qualities possessed by prophets. The opposite of *ẓill* is *aṣal,* meaning *original.* The prophets possess their peculiar qualities in the *original* sense, and the saints only display these qualities as a *reflection* by closely following the prophets. Every Muslim is required to emulate the qualities of the prophets, and follow in their footsteps. The saints attain this goal to a very high grade, and thus show a clear image of those qualities.

Classical Islamic scholars have explained the concept of *ẓill* at length in their books. Hazrat Mirza has reiterated the same explanations. He writes elsewhere:

> "The prophet is as the original, and the saint is as the *ẓill* (his image or shadow)." (*Karāmat aṣ-Ṣādiqīn,* p. 85)
>
> "I firmly believe that our Holy Prophet Muhammad is the *khātam al-anbiyā',* and after him no prophet shall come for this nation, neither new nor old. Not a jot or tittle of the Holy Quran shall be abrogated. Of course, saints (sing. *muḥaddath*) will come who will be spoken to by God, and possess some attributes of full prophethood by way of *ẓill,* and in some ways be coloured with the colour of prophethood. I am one of these." (*Nishān Āsmānī,* p. 28)

Note 27 (page 51)

The reference here is to the period of the "righteous khilāfat" after the Holy Prophet.

Note 28 (page 60)

The word *dhikr* literally means *reminder*, and is the term used for the *Quran* in the verse under discussion (15:9).

Note 29 (page 68)

An expression of this form occurs in a Saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, in which he has prophesied how the Muslims of the later times will follow closely in the footsteps of the Israelites. The resemblance would be as close as that between the two shoes of a pair (see *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, Book of Faith, chapter VI, section II). Hazrat Mirza's view about the striking similarity between present-day Muslims and the Jews of Jesus' time is often echoed by leaders of Sunni Muslims. Pakistan's most renowned Muslim theologian of today, Dr Israr Ahmad, recently commented on this hadith as follows:

> "The Holy Prophet Muhammad foretold that the same evils would arise among his followers as had arisen among the Israelites. He said: *'If they, the Israelites, had crawled into the hole of a lizard, you will crawl into it too'*. His words go so far that although one is hesitant to quote them, but they are the words of the Holy Prophet which I put before you. He said: *'If there was a wretched man among the Israelites who committed incest with his own mother, then among you also shall arise such a wretched man'*. The meaning is that all the evils, in terms of religion, doctrine, thought, knowledge and deeds, which came to prevail among the Israelites, shall also come to prevail among the Muslims. The text of the hadith is as follows: *'All the things which happened to the Israelites shall also happen to my followers, just as one shoe matches the other shoe'*. This is a most eloquent comparison. Look at a pair of shoes, and because the front parts of the two point in opposite directions, you see one shoe being apparently different from the other. But put the souls of the two shoes together, and they are identical. Similarly, the circumstances of the Israelites and the Muslims appear to be different, because after all, there is the distance of fourteen hundred years, and so there is some difference on the face of it. But if you look between the lines, you find that there is not a hair's breadth of difference. And as to the condition of the Jews described in the Holy Quran, each one of us must look at himself to see whether he is not a victim of that condition."

This extract is from an article written by Dr Israr Ahmad, published in the Urdu Daily paper *Jang* (see the London edition of *Jang* for 19 October 1987, page 3).

Note 30 (page 69)

The reference is to Genesis 49:10 which says: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh come".

Note 31 (page 70)

The reference is to 18:98–99 where, speaking of the coming of Gog and Magog as the coming to pass of the promise of the Lord, it is added: "And on that day We shall let some of them surge against others like waves, and the trumpet will be blown ...".

Note 32 (page 71)

This point has been discussed earlier in this book where, after noting the verse "and when the messengers (*rusul*) are brought at their appointed time" (77:11), Hazrat Mirza writes: "It should be remembered that in the word of God the term *rusul* is applied to the singular as well as to one who is not a messenger" (p. 26). See also Note 11.

Note 33 (page 71)

See Note 20.

Note 34 (page 75)

Like, in 24:55.

Note 35 (page 76)

This hadith is given in *Mis̲hkāt al-Maṣābīḥ,* Book of *Fitan,* chapter III, section III.

Note 36 (page 78)

See Matthew, ch. 17, verses 10–13.

Note 37 (page 82)

If a person or party accuses another of a serious sin, casting a grave slur on the latter's character, then under certain strict conditions Islam allows the two parties to agree mutually to enter into a *mubāhila,* viz., each side prays to God asking for His curse and wrath to befall *whichever of the two is the liar.* The Holy Prophet Muhammad challenged a group of Christian religious leaders to a *mubāhila* if they considered him to be an imposter; see the Quran, 3:60. When Hazrat Mirza claimed to the Promised Messiah, some *maulavis* hastily demanded that he dare hold a *mubāhila* with them. However, Hazrat Mirza explained to them the Islamic requirements for a *mubāhila* as follows:

> "Let it be clear to the readers that Mr Abdul Haqq had asked for a

> *mubāhila*. But I cannot understand how a *mubāhila* could be permissible regarding those matters of difference which do not make either party into a *kāfir* or an unjust one. It is clear from the Holy Quran that in a *mubāhila* each party must believe that the party opposite is a liar, i.e. is deliberately deviating from the truth, and is not merely mistaken, so that each side is able to say: *may the curse of God be upon the liars!* Now if Mr Abdul Haqq considers me to be a liar due to his erroneous judgment, I do not call him a liar, but believe him to be in error, and it is not allowable to curse a Muslim who is merely in error." (*Izāla Auhām*, p. 637)
>
> "In our case, a *mubāhila* will be permissible when the opposite party make an announcement as follows. *'We do not consider this claimant to be merely mistaken, in the manner in which there are some sects in Islam that are right and some that are in error, and in the manner in which sects differ with one another; on the contrary, we know with full certainty that this man is an imposter; and we do not stand in need of saying that only God knows the right answer in this controversy, because we know definitely the actual meaning of this prophecy'* (i.e. the subject of dispute between Hazrat Mirza and his opponents).
>
> "There is also the point that before a *mubāhila*, it is essential to listen to the preaching of the man in question. It is obligatory on the man who comes from God that he must first try to make his deniers understand the truth of his claim by means of clear arguments, and show them the signs of his truth. If, after listening to his explanations, the deniers do not desist (from demanding *mubāhila*) and say: *'We know for certain that you are an imposter'*, then the last resort is *mubāhila*. It is not that, without understanding, comprehending or listening to anything, one should have recourse to *mubāhila* instantly." (Letter published in *Al-Hakam*, 24 March 1902)

It will be seen that Hazrat Mirza dealt with his opponents leniently and charitably when they demanded a *mubāhila* with him, and he refused to curse them as liars for merely disagreeing with his claim. However, they continued to brand him as a deliberate imposter and to misrepresent his beliefs to the public, even after he published numerous statements explaining his position and denying their charges. It was only then that Hazrat Mirza agreed to hold *mubāhila* with any *maulavi* who wished to do it.

Note 38 (page 85)

The first quotation is from Hadith reports relating to the coming of the Messiah, and means: "Jesus shall appear near the minaret of Damascus". The second is from the Holy Quran (62:3), and refers to future generations of the Muslims in the words: "Others from among them who have not yet joined them". This Quranic passage in context means that just as the Holy Prophet Muhammad was a teacher and a purifier for his followers of his own time, so shall he be for the coming generations of Muslims. The spiritual men of Islam take it to mean that among later Muslims there would arise deputies of the Holy Prophet to act as his spiritual representatives. The 'numerical value' of these words is derived using the *abjad* system in Arabic, which assigns a numerical value to each letter of the alphabet.

Note 39 (page 86)

It is not possible to deal adequately with the subject of prophecies in a note, but due to various misconceptions about Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad on this score, we make the observations given below.

Prophecies which are disclosed by God to prophets as well as saints, and the manner of fulfilment of those prophecies, are governed by certain laws, and these laws can be seen in operation in innumerable examples of actual prophecies given in the Quran, Hadith, other Islamic works, as well as the Bible. The prophecies made by Hazrat Mirza must be judged by the same rules. One of these rules is that when God, through the mouth of His righteous agent, discloses the news of someone's doom or destruction on account of their wicked deeds, the fulfilment of this news depends upon their subsequent behaviour. The decreed punishment may come as prophesied, or it may be averted for a while, or it may be withdrawn altogether. The Quran itself says many times that a prophet's opponents are punished with *some* (and not *all*) of the punishment which he prophesies as befalling them. See the Quran, 40:28, 27:71,72, 10:46, 13:40, 40:77, etc.

The prophecies mentioned here by Hazrat Mirza were made about persons who had used extremely abusive language about the Holy Prophet Muhammad in their writings and pronouncements. They had been repeatedly warned by Hazrat Mirza to abstain from this vituperation and abuse, but instead of heeding the warnings they mocked the idea of a sign coming from God as a punishment for their outrages. Indeed, they taunted Hazrat Mirza to bring a sign showing God's displeasure towards them. Hazrat Mirza prayed to God, and as a result he received prophecies in each case about the impending doom of the party concerned to befall within a certain specified time limit, as he has noted here.

Lekhram was a leader of the militant Arya Samaj movement among the Hindus, and reviled all the prophets of God in the most coarse language. He grew bolder after the prophecy against him was delivered, and consequently he met his doom within the time limit, fulfilling all the other signs in the prophecy as well. Abdullah Atham, a Christian missionary, was terrified by the prophecy against him, and remained totally silent from then on, speaking not a single word of abuse about Islam or the Holy Prophet Muhammad. In accordance with the Divine law, therefore, God's mercy postponed his fate and he survived the 15 month term. After the term was over, however, his friends prevailed upon him to conceal his earlier repentance, in order to falsify the prophecy in the public eye. As a result, the Divine law re-instated the original prophecy, and he met his doom shortly afterwards.

As regards the third prophecy, Ahmad Baig and his family were relatives of Hazrat Mirza. They had become atheistic, and used to openly revile the Holy Prophet Muhammad and the Quran. They also mocked and ridiculed Hazrat Mirza for his defence of Islam. He warned them privately that he had received revelation that they would be destroyed unless they repented. However, they only scoffed at these warnings. As a last sign, and as a test for them, Hazrat Mirza was directed by God to ask for the hand of Ahmad Baig's eldest daughter in marriage, so that the family may be reformed through association with him. (Marriage for the purpose of such reform is a tradition of the righteous and the prophets.) Should they refuse and marry her to someone else, both Ahmad Baig and the son-in-law would die within the periods fixed in the prophecy.

All this was conveyed by Hazrat Mirza in private letters, but Ahmad Baig and his family made the matter public in order to ridicule the prophecy. They then defiantly married off the daughter to one Mirza Sultan Muhammad. Within six months, Ahmad Baig and some of his relatives were dead. This struck terror into the rest of them. They begged God for forgiveness, and entreated Hazrat Mirza to pray on their behalf. This repentence averted the fate which was prophesied to befall the man to whom Ahmad Baig would marry his daughter. In a notice published in September 1894, Hazrat Mirza wrote:

> "Seeing their repentence and asking of forgiveness from God, I became sure that the prophesied term for the death of Mirza Sultan Muhammad could not be maintained because such terms, which are of the type of signs that convey fear and warning, are always an avertable fate. ... The time of the coming of punishment is an avertable fate, which is moved if fear and turning to God is displayed, as is proved by the whole of the Holy Quran."

Mirza Sultan Muhammad and Ahmad Baig's family started showing great respect and reverence for Hazrat Mirza. In a letter written five years after Hazrat Mirza's death, Mirza Sultan Muhammad wrote:

> "I consider the late Mirza sahib to be good, righteous, a servant of Islam, noble-hearted and godly, and I believe this now as well as before. I have no quarrel with his followers. Indeed I am sorry that, due to various reasons, I did not have the honour of meeting him during his life." (Letter dated 21 March 1913.)

A large number of the deceased Ahmad Baig's relatives joined the Ahmadiyya Movement in the course of time.

As the aim and purpose of the prophecy, namely, the reform and reclamation of this family, was fulfilled after only the first of its six constituent parts (as enumerated in the text) had come to pass, the remaining five became redundant.

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